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THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER

OCTOBER, 1939

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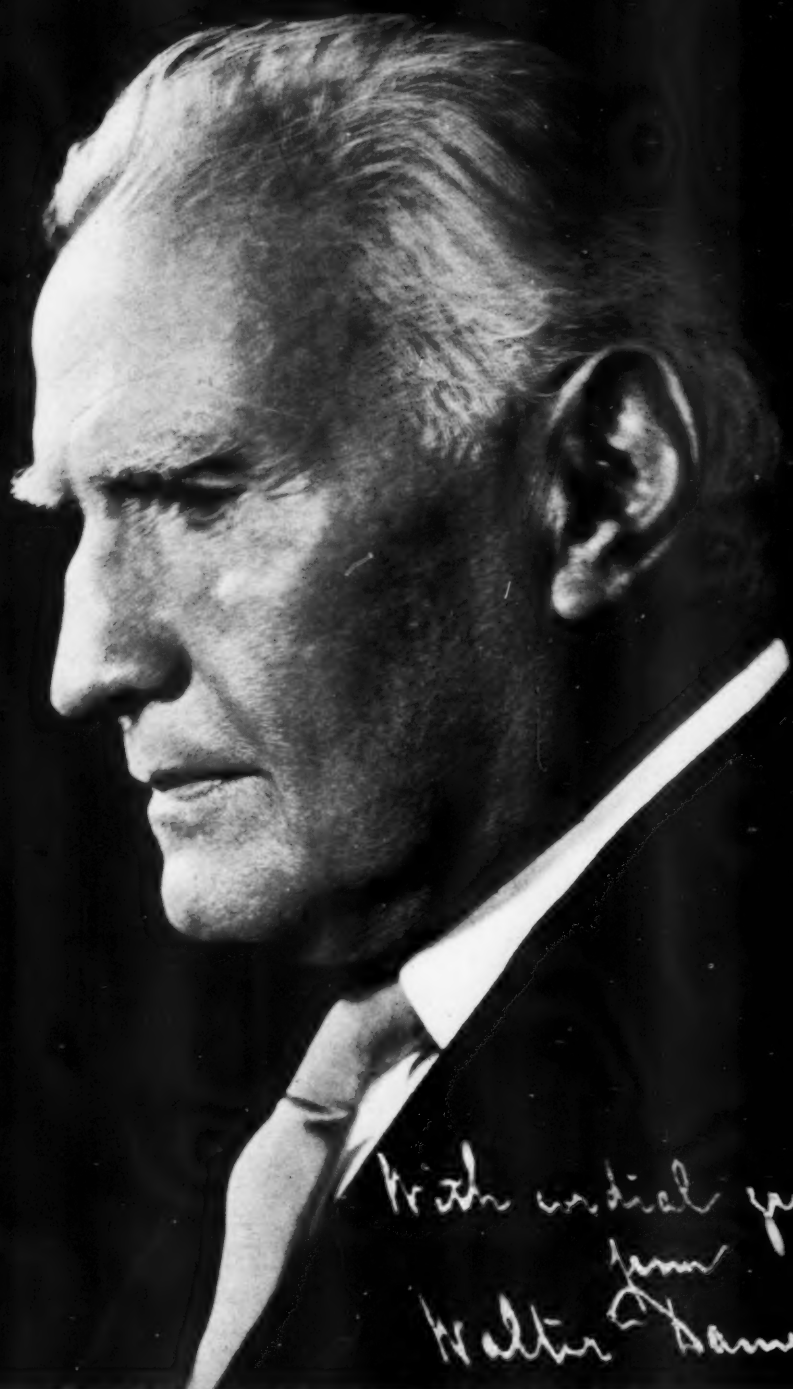
RECORD NOTES & REVIEWS - OVERTONES

COLLECTORS' CORNER - SWING MUSIC NOTES - ETC.



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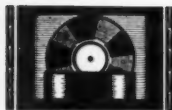


With cordial greetings
from
Walter Samuels

THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER

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<i>Page</i>	<i>By</i>
198	Contemporary Trends in Choral Composition Marion Bauer
203	Adventures in Record Collecting — 2 E. V. Benedict and P. H. Reed
209	Choosing A Pickup Robert S. Lanier
211	A Note On Walter Damrosch
212	Overtones
214	Editorial Notes
218	Record Notes and Reviews
230	Correspondence
231	Swing Music Notes Enzo Archetti
234	Record Collectors' Corner Julian Morton Moses
234	In the Popular Vein Horace Van Norman

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Frontispiece: Prominent Musical Personalities — Past and Present

No. 24 — Dr. WALTER DAMROSCH

CONTEMPORARY TRENDS

IN CHORAL COMPOSITION

MARION BAUER

AS A 20TH-CENTURY COMPOSER AND A student of musical history, I am interested in watching a development that amounts almost to a renaissance of choral music.

Someone might challenge this statement with the remark that choral works have always been written, that there has hardly been a composer of fame who has not added to the choral repertory. And while I would agree, I should claim that many of those works were incidental and I would repeat that in my humble opinion we are today witnessing an important revival in choral music—a revival that is facing two ways: into the past and into the future.

Our musicologists have brought to light choral collections which have been made available to singing societies, madrigal groups, and glee clubs. With the accessibility of these works of the Italian, Netherland, French, Spanish and German madrigalists, of the Tudor composers, of Church music, including plainsong, Latin masses and motets, German chorales, Bach cantatas, the Russian Greek service, the 19th-century anthem, etc., interest in the highest vocal art has been aroused. Thanks to research into the folk music of practically every nation, another vast resource has been tapped.

A glance at the programs of American college, university, and school singing societies shows how tremendously musical taste has improved. A more intimate acquaintance with the vocal polyphonic schools that preceded the 18th century, and with folk material, including our own, has stimulated interest in choral music and has led contemporary composers to turn their efforts to choral writing.

Their compositions have taken two main directions: a *cappella* choruses and choral works with soloists and orchestral accompaniment.

The arrangements of English folksongs by Vaughan Williams, Holst, Peter Warlock, Rutland Boughton, etc., which were made familiar to us by the English Singers along with their large repertory of madrigals and ballets by Byrd, Gibbon, Bull, Wilbye, Weelkes, and the rest of the Tudor School, have had unquestioned influence in the choral revival. Cecil Sharp, the English folksong collector, did invaluable work in bringing to the attention of the British people their extraordinary store of beautiful folksongs. He came to this country and revealed to us a rich vein of English folk music which had been preserved almost intact in the mountain ridges of Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Virginia. He gave the impetus to some of our own archaeologists to uncover other sources of American folk music, so that today instead of hanging our heads in shame because we have no folk music, we have discovered undreamed-of wealth in folk material from North, East, South, and West. All this is grist for our choral music-mill.

Dean Edmund Fellowes helped the cause greatly by his tireless search for the parts of the vocal music of the Tudor Period and by their final assembling into a comprehensive collection.

In France, in the middle of the 19th century, the Niedermeyer School had been established to study the works of 15th-, 16th-, and 17th-century masters. Among its students were Gabriel Fauré¹ and Henri Expert, librarian of the Conservatoire de Paris, who reprinted much of the Franco-Flemish music in his series *Les Maîtres Musiciens de la Renaissance Française*.

1. A rarely beautiful work of Fauré, undoubtedly influenced by his study of the old music, is his *Requiem*, which is available in a fine recorded performance (Columbia set M-354).

Before the close of the century, a revival of religious music was successfully brought about and the *Schola Cantorum* was founded. The awakened interest in the "great primitives" and the curiosity about medieval music aroused and nurtured by these two schools, have undoubtedly helped greatly in the present development of choral music. Gregorian Chant became available to the choirs, choir schools, and music scholars through the studies of the Benedictine monks of Solesmes² in the 19th century; the music of troubadour and trouvère was no longer picturesque fiction but through the research of musicologists was made a living art; and Vincent d'Indy published modern editions of the works of Monteverdi, Rameau, Lully, and others.

Included in this revival was a reverential and profitable study of Bach's cantatas, chorales, Passions, and the *B minor Mass*. All this has quickened the choral consciousness of both our public and our composers.

At the same time a new spirit has cropped up, a kind of humanism which best expresses itself in song. In a recent issue of *Modern Music*, H. H. Stuckenschmidt, writing on the "Vocal Style in the 20th Century", said that practically all of the present day composers "have cast their most important and decisive works into vocal forms". This seems to be a fairly daring statement and bears examination. Modern composers inherited the declamatory style from Wagner and "beautiful melody" from so-called "bel canto" writers—Rossini, Verdi, Puccini, but they are trying to solve their own problem of melody best suited to the new polyphonic era which has developed rapidly.

Modern Extremists

Among the moderns, the two extremes of vocal experimentation are found in Schoenberg and Stravinsky. In Arnold Schoenberg one finds the practical application of his own atonal twelve-tone theory; the wide interval skips in what seem to be unvocal leaps and impossible ranges; and his curious development of melody based on speech called *Sprechstimme*, as he used it in *Pierrot Lunaire* for solo voice and chamber music accompaniment. His first major work was *Gurrelieder*³

for very large orchestra, soli, and chorus. It is a choral symphony.

Igor Stravinsky has obviously returned to a folk music type in which he seems to find a primitive power such as he evolved in *Oedipus Rex*, *Symphony of Psalms*,⁴ and *Perséphone*. His vocal music is declamatory in style and compressed within a narrow range. Béla Bartók and other Hungarians and Slavs have turned to folksong for the same reason as Stravinsky.

One of the first choral works in which I was struck with that curious Slavic elemental force was Prokofiev's barbaric "*Sept, Ils sont sept!*" composed in 1915 to cuneiform incantations excavated in Mesopotamia and presented in Paris in 1924 by Koussevitzky.

A Gifted Choral Writer

Another work I heard at that time in Paris was Arthur Honegger's *Le Roi David* (King David),⁵ an oratorio made from incidental music to a play by René Morax produced in Switzerland in 1921. *King David* took the Paris public by storm. Every performance, and there were many, was sold out as soon as it was announced. It has never had a comparable vogue in this country. Representing David as shepherd, soldier, and king, in twenty-eight separate numbers, orchestral, choral, and solo, it shows the excellent gift of the young Frenchman in his handling of choruses. He was 27 when he wrote the score in two months on a commission. It has spontaneous creative power, it is vivid and poignant. Honegger caught the Oriental primitive quality of the Biblical portrayal. Some of the orchestral fanfares in polytonal style are barbaric and exciting. Traces of Bach with 20th-century implications are evident and effective in the first lovely Psalm "Praise the Lord" and in the final Amen. The Lamentations of Gilboa, "The Lord is My Light" and "If I had the Wings of a Dove", with its strong suggestion of Gabriel Fauré, are of haunting beauty.

Guido Pannain, the Italian writer, said of Honegger: "the best of his many aspects is the lyrical one—sometimes instinct with joy and praise, sometimes touched with a melancholy that expresses itself in songs of winged sweetness. The vivid score of *King David* is steeped in the poignancy of a racial, a national heart-cry . . . Honegger in this mood is

2. A series of recordings of Gregorian Chant by the famous Monks Choir of Saint-Pierre de Solesmes Abbey, will be found in Victor set M-87.

3. Recorded complete by Philadelphia Orchestra with soloists under Stokowski's direction. Victor set M-127.

4. Recorded by Stravinsky, Straram Orchestra and Chorus. Columbia set M-162.

5. Columbia disc 68937-D contains five excerpts from *Le Roi David*.

a poet of the human voice raised in song, the magician who calls forth ancient modes from the chasm of tradition . . . *King David* glows with a collective lyric impulse—with the voice of a nation raised in adoration of the Divinity. . . . There is a rough strength in this music, fired, as it is, by an overwhelming genius for choral writing."

Like *King David*, Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* is an oratorio-opera, also with a narrator. It was given as a stage work by the League of Composers and the Philadelphia Orchestra with the Harvard University Glee Club just seven years ago. It was also complete and satisfying when presented as an oratorio by Koussevitzky. The French libretto after Sophocles by Jean Cocteau, was translated at Stravinsky's desire into Latin. The narrator relates the ancient Greek tragedy between the six scenes of the two acts in French (English in the American productions) but the soloists and male chorus sing in Latin. Stravinsky apparently wished to divert the interest from the words to the music. Also to stress the music, he asked that the actors be as immovable as columns and appear and disappear by means of a mechanical process, which led to the use of huge puppets in the League of Composers production.

Influence of Handel

The music shows the influence of Handel, and is harmonic in character—not only harmonic but actually hovers around the tonic triad. This is a curious reaction from the barbaric dissonance of *Le Sacre du Printemps* and *Les Noces*,⁶ and from the polytonal and contrapuntal neo-classicism of his piano concerto, *Octuor*, and other chamber music works. Handel is not the only influence one finds in *Oedipus*. For instance, Jocasta's aria is reminiscent of Italian opera of a century or more ago. The choral writing is curiously individual and effective, and the orchestral treatment masterly. In spite of a first impression of a mixture of styles, the work stamps itself upon the memory as a characteristic phase in Stravinsky's development.

The *Symphony of Psalms* was composed by Stravinsky at Koussevitzky's request for the fiftieth anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. It is for chorus and orchestra minus violins and violas—a choral symphony in three movements based on selections from the Psalms in Latin. One is struck by its in-

tensity of mood, seriousness and grandeur, by the starkness of its harmonies and its characteristic rhythms. The choral writing has been evolved with simplicity and directness. The first movement is an accompanied chorale; the second is a four-part fugue; and the finale, an Alleluia, is treated in a contrapuntal manner of great purity of style and moving nobility.

In the Stuckenschmidt article, the writer states: "In the choral passages of the *Symphony des Psalms*, the majestic breadth which already flows through the soli of *Oedipus Rex* is confirmed and intensified. But it is in the *Perséphone* that Stravinsky completely consummates this technic. The tenor part for Eumolpe is the most powerful of any he has written for the human voice. Here a musical logic is achieved which rises directly from the possibilities of songs".

A Musical Melodrama

Perséphone (or Proserpina) is a melodrama in three parts for orchestra, chorus, tenor, and speaking voice, on a poem by André Gide based on a Homeric hymn to Demeter. It was written at the request of Mme. Ida Rubinstein of the Paris Opéra. She declaimed and mimed the part of Perséphone in a performance that was "neither a ballet nor an oratorio nor a melodrama, although it partook of the nature of all three".

The music is in set pieces, largely for chorus with orchestral accompaniment, with tenor soli and Perséphone's verses declaimed, not sung. For the most part it is simple, too simple perhaps for those who think of the *Sacre* or *Les Noces* as expressing the real Stravinsky. I agree with Frederick Jacobi, however, who wrote in *Modern Music*: "Stravinsky with his intelligence, his fundamental integrity and his constant grappling with problems of one kind or another, continually renews himself and grows. Who is to say that he reached his height in the *Sacre* or in *Noces*? Let us not judge in haste, for good or for bad, his new works which, each in its time, present new problems of form, of substance and, above all, of intention. They are to be listened to and enjoyed and thought over; not to be immediately classified." (March-April, 1935).

We are reminded that Gustav Mahler introduced the chorus into half of his symphonies. He was called the "song-symphonist" and song is the seed out of which his works grew. Although his use of the chorus was inherited from Beethoven's *Ninth*, psychologic-

6. Both are conducted by the composer on Columbia records—sets M-129 and M-204 respectively.

ally he pointed to the future, to Stravinsky and Schoenberg curiously enough.

Another choral work that impressed me as being symptomatic of this renaissance was a *Stabat Mater* by the late Karol Szymanowski, which I heard in Liège at the Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music. The *Stabat Mater* is very impressive and displayed a new and profound emotional style and mature technique. In the same class is Zoltan Kodaly's *Psalmus Hungaricus*, composed for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the union of Buda and Pesth in 1923. It has been performed by Albert Stoessel in New York and Worcester. Mr. Stoessel has been instrumental in presenting many new works at the annual Worcester Festivals and with the Oratorio Society of New York. Mr. Hugh Ross, too, of the Schola Cantorum has given much of his time and programs to propaganda for this revival of choral music. Other choral, and indeed orchestral, conductors throughout the country are aware of the growing importance of these new works without realizing, perhaps, to what an extent this period will go down in history as a choral as well as an orchestral era.

An attractive new French work is the *Mass in G* by Francis Poulenc, heard here for the first time from Columbia records.⁷

A Sibelius' Work

At a recent concert of the Boston Symphony Orchestra (Jan. 6, 1938), Dr. Koussevitzky presented the Helsinki University Chorus of Finland in two choral works by Jean Sibelius. One, *The Origin of Fire*, for baritone, male chorus, and orchestra, seemed as representative a work of its kind as his symphonies are among modern symphonies.

A choral work of particular mark is Ernest Bloch's *Sacred Service*, commissioned in 1930 by Gerald Warburg for Sabbath morning liturgical use in the Reformed Synagogue. The Swiss composer, an American by adoption, claims the work "as the quintessence of his life experience as man and artist. The fruit of long meditation, the *Sacred Service* transcends the frame of ecclesiastical function or racial cult to assume universal scope. In it he has recorded his philosophic conception of life and death, of man's relations to Creation." (Raymond Hall—*Musical Courier*, Mar. 31, 1934.) Bloch has used the Hebrew service as the peg on which to develop his musical ideas much as Bach used the ritualistic mass as the framework for his great *B minor*.

England, which has fostered oratorio since the advent of Handel and of Mendelssohn, has been extremely active in this revival both in sacred and secular fields. The 20th century has produced much English choral music of a high order, such as Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* and Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony* using Walt Whitman's poems as a text for the choral numbers. Whitman has appealed to English composers, if not more, at least earlier, than he did to Americans. Frederick Delius wrote *Sea Drift*,⁸ a beautiful and truly inspired work, from *Leaves of Grass*, for chorus, baritone solo, and orchestra. An earlier work of Vaughan Williams with Whitman words was *Towards the Unknown Region*. Another Englishman whose choral works have won distinction is the late Gustav Holst, composer of the *Hymn of Jesus* for two choruses, orchestra, and organ. A most notable composition which was recently presented in New York by the Schola Cantorum is Delius' *Mass of Life* for chorus, four soloists, and orchestra, based on Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, which also inspired Richard Strauss. Read by Delius in his youth, it made so deep an impression that when he conceived the idea of a mass for the living "because enough masses had been written for the dead", he decided to use excerpts from Nietzsche's philosophic work.

More Modern

Of quite another character is Constant Lambert's *The Rio Grande*,⁹ a brilliant score reflecting our American jazz, written when the composer was twenty-four. It is for chorus, orchestra, and piano solo, and was presented not long ago by Mr. Stoessel. Young William Walton has written in what was designated as "an effective neo-Handelian manner" an oratorio, *Belshazzar's Feast*, which has been performed here. It deserves to be recorded.

Lack of space prevents my writing of many other works, such as Nabokoff's oratorio *Job* and his *Ode*, and Dukelsky's the *End of St. Petersburg*, but I must leave room for America's contribution, which we might start with Charles Martin Loeffler's *Hora Mystica*, a symphony for men's voices and orchestra, and his *Canticle to St. Francis*, which was sung on the first program in the Library of Congress Festival of chamber music.

A cappella music has had many protagonists

8. Available in the Delius Society Set, Volume 2—Columbia set 290.

9. Available in Columbia set X-52.

7. Set X-127.

among 20th-century Americans. Many fine arrangements of Negro spirituals have been made, and folk music has been much more an object of research and a subject for choral music than formerly. An interesting experiment in modern choral writing is Roy Harris' *Song for Occupations*¹⁰ commissioned by the League of Composers for the Westminster Choir. John Finley Williamson, its director, included the work in the programs of the Russian tour made by the Choir. Mr. Harris uses the voices in a dissonant declamation which sounds an individual note in vocal music. His rhythmic figures are dictated by the Whitman text. Mr. Harris has also written a *Symphony for Voices* on four Whitman poems for chorus and orchestra.¹¹

Randall Thompson, too, has been successful in his choral composing. He was commissioned by the League of Composers to write for the Harvard Glee Club. His long a cappella work, *The Peaceable Kingdom*, is based on excerpts from the Book of Isaiah. He displayed a contrapuntal mastery and an understanding of choral writing. An earlier work, *Americana*, a sequence of five choruses for mixed voices, has enjoyed a well-deserved vogue for its humor and spice. Its texts are presumably drawn from newspaper material. Another commission of the League was Colin McPhee's setting *From the Revelation of St. John the Divine* for the Princeton Glee Club. The Biblical text is set with dramatic intensity in declamatory manner.

Based on Bach

A recent concert of choral music by contemporary composers presented by Albert Stoessel with the Oratorio Society of New York included his own brilliant *Festival Fanfare*, a chorale-prelude based on the Bach-Nicolai chorale melody, "Wake, Arise, a Voice is Calling", showing his expert handling of voices and orchestra; *Christ in the Universe*, a short, sincere, and beautiful setting of Alice Meynell's poem for soli, chorus and orchestra by our beloved dean of American women composers, Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, whose fine *Canticle of the Sun* shows the choral trend of her later works; and R. Nathaniel Dett's *The Ordering of Moses* for soli, chorus and orchestra.

This colored composer, famed for his *Juba*

10. Columbia set X-50.

11. A difficult score which is unfortunately not done full justice to in the recording (Victor set M-427).

Dance and arrangements of Negro spirituals, is director of music at Hampton Institute, where he has developed choral singing to a high degree. Mr. Dett has used the spiritual, *Go Down Moses*, as the basis for this Biblical folk scene picturing the Prophet as a young shepherd. It is one of the most effective works of its kind and the apotheosis of the Negro spiritual, treated with expert technique and a feeling for both primitive and sophisticated musical means. It is doubtful whether any but a Negro musician could have written *The Ordering of Moses*.

Among the women composers, besides Mrs. Beach, Gena Branscombe, Mary Howe, Mabel Daniels and Marianne Genet have devoted considerable attention to choral composition.

Howard Hanson's *The Lament of Beowulf* and *Songs* from Whitman's *Drum Taps* are fine examples of his style. I heard the *Lament* on the same program at a Worcester Festival with Werner Josten's *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, which was a serious, beautifully wrought work for soprano and baritone soloists, mixed voices and orchestra.

Archaic Atmosphere

A short *Hymnus to the Queen of Paradys* for alto solo, women's voices, strings and organ recalls the lovely archaic atmosphere of Mr. Josten's *Concerto Sacro I and II*. This was sung at the *Three Choirs Festival* under direction of Lazare Saminsky, who himself has written some notable choral music. On the same program Harl MacDonald's *Missa de Battale* based on old Spanish chants, Douglas Moore's *Simon Legree*, Horace Johnson's *Etain* and Alfred Greenfield's *Undying Flame* showed what fine choral work is being written in America.

Frederick Jacobi wrote a beautiful Friday Evening Synagogical Service which Mr. Saminsky frequently performs with his choir. Mr. Jacobi has also written *A Poet in the Desert* and *Two Assyrian Prayers*.

Philip James, winner of several important orchestral prizes, has a long list of choral works to his credit.

But when I begin talking about the achievements of American colleagues, I am so enthusiastic that it is hard to avoid long lists of composers whose works go to prove my point that we are witnessing a choral renaissance of importance. Undoubtedly, as time goes on, we shall find quite a number of these works appearing on records.

ADVENTURES IN RECORD COLLECTING

I. SOME SYMPHONIC RAMBLES

EMIL V. BENEDICT AND PETER HUGH REED

PART TWO

EXCEPT WHEN HIS *Suite, Op. 19*, IS GIVEN, Ernst von Dohnanyi's name seldom graces symphonic programs. Only once have we heard a concert performance of his ingenious *Variations on a Nursery Theme*, for piano and orchestra. This work could well replace one of the standard concertos now and then. Its sole representation on discs is Victor's (set M-162), with the composer at the piano; and although the recording is six years old it is still worth owning. Another interesting work off the beaten path, really a miniature symphony displaying the composer's gift for clever craftsmanship, is the *Symphonische Minuten* (absurdly labelled *Minuets* in its domestic repressing from the English Decca recording).

A couple of years ago Victor assembled in an album, queerly titled *Program No. 1*, four unfamiliar pieces played by Dr. Frank Black and the N.B.C. String Symphony (set M-390). The intention behind the title was, of course, to present a recorded example of an N.B.C. String Symphony program, as heard on the air. Two sets were issued, hence the number one. The first set contains a *Sinfonietta* by Miaskowsky, one of the important figures in modern Russian music. It is an interesting example of the strongly neurasthenic trend in much modern music, although basically—despite its modern idioms—it stems from both Glazounoff and Tchaikowsky. By way of contrast, in this first album, there are Arensky's *Variations on a Theme of Tchaikowsky*, *Canzonetta* by Sibelius, and *Symphony in C major* by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach. This diversified collection should prove a pleasant surprise to the adventurous phonophile. The playing is of the high order associated with Dr. Black and his chamber orchestra (now no longer in existence) although the recording, like most N.B.C. studio broadcasts, lacks vivifying room-resonance.

One of the smaller record companies placed us in its debt with two albums, one containing "first recordings" of three 18th-century symphonic works—taken from a period in which more great composers may be said to have flourished than in any other,—and another containing William Boyces's *Eight Symphonies* (in reality overtures to operas). The Boyce works, poorly recorded and not too well played, are pleasant music of their period but definitely overshadowed by Handel's *Concerti Grossi* and Bach's *Brandenburg Concerti*. The 18th-century album is a really worthy contribution to recorded music: the three works, by Locatelli, Pergolesi and Karl Stamitz, are not of merely historical value but are highly interesting and delightful music in their own right. Locatelli and Pergolesi are represented by *concerti grossi*, and Stamitz by a similar work called *Quartet for Orchestra*. The Pergolesi work displays emotional depth; its ingenious interplay of voices and its harmonic dissonances strike a rare note of beauty. The Stamitz work is so spirited and refreshing that it proves irresistible; one is very apt promptly to return the needle to the opening groove at the end of the first playing. The endearing qualities of this music forcibly remind us that not much has been done by recording companies for Corelli, Vivaldi, Frescobaldi, Sammartini, Geminiani, Telemann, Stamitz (the elder as well as the younger) and a host of others who enriched the same fertile period of the composers represented above. The beautiful *Christmas Concerto* has long been a favorite in Weissmann's badly dated and none-too-well played recording, but lately an H. M. V. set by Bruno Walter was released both in England and France which we sincerely hope Victor will issue here soon.

Symphonic programs in the main ignore Franz Liszt except for the showy and banal *Les Preludes* and the *E flat Concerto*. His finest orchestral work is *A Faust Symphony*,

with final tenor solo and men's chorus. Selmar Meyrowitz gives a good account of this score, but as in many of the Pathé-Columbia issues there is a lack of vitalizing room-resonance in the recording. (Columbia set 272). Those familiar with their Wagner will raise their eyebrows on first hearing the Liszt symphony. One of the seldom-given tone poems, *Mazepa*, is in the Decca lists, but its performance lacks polish and the record surfaces (those we heard, at any rate) are of the sandpaper variety.

Ottorino Respighi is best known for his colorful and ingenious *The Fountains of Rome*, now attainable in a brilliant and splendidly performed version by John Barbirolli and the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York (Victor set M-576). Undoubtedly this is Respighi's best and most original composition. Those who admire *The Pines of Rome*, which Toscanini made famous, will find a satisfactory performance and recording of it by Coppola and the Paris Conservatory Orchestra (Victor discs 11917-8). Then there is one part of the less successful *Feste Romane*, the *October Excursions*, on a Columbia disc (no. 69017-D) played by Molajoli and the so-called Milan Symphony.

A Master Craftsman

Respighi was truly a master of orchestration; he acquired his craftsmanship in this direction undoubtedly from his teacher, Rimsky-Korsakoff. Besides his descriptive orchestral music, he has to his credit several orchestral suites arranged from dances and lute airs by composers dating mainly from the 16th and 17th centuries. Parts of the *First Suite*, *Gagliarda* and *Villanella*, were recorded in Italy some years ago, but these recordings are out-moded today. Three movements from the *Second Suite* were done by Vincenzo Bellezza and the Covent Garden Orchestra (formerly available on Victor discs 11138-9), and although the recording dates back seven years they are still enjoyable. This is genuinely lovely music, which should appeal to all but those unalterably opposed to arrangements. There is an outstanding slow movement called *The Bells of Paris*, attributed to Mersenne, a 16th-century Parisian who was a theologian, a philosopher and a musician. The *Third Suite*, for strings alone, has been recorded by the Roma Quartet (H. M. V.), and also by the Berlin Philharmonic on Telefunken records. Another Respighi score, notable for rich and splendid orchestration, is the ballet *La Boutique Fantasque* (Victor set M-415, excellently recorded), arranged from Rossini.

The late Peter Warlock (né Philip Heseltine) was an English composer with an extraordinary poetic sensitivity. He knew and loved the music of Delius, and the effect it had on him is felt in his own music. His love of exquisite detail is illustrated in his *Capriol Suite*, settings of tunes from a famous 16th-century treatise on dancing by Arbeau. It is a captivating assortment of airs. Badly recorded on a Decca disc, it is fortunately available on an H. M. V. record excellently recorded as played by Constant Lambert and his Chamber Orchestra. In his *Serenade* for string orchestra, written for Delius' 60th birthday, Warlock conveys a nostalgic mood quite appropriate to the subject. Lambert has also recorded this on an H. M. V. disc. It is to be hoped that Victor will bring these two discs forward in their so-called Connoisseurs' Corner, for these are truly connoisseur items.

Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra went far off the beaten path when they recorded Henry Eichheim's symphonic variations, *Bali* (Victor discs 14141-2). This is an unusually colorful and exotic score, employing some Balinese instruments and imitations of Balinese Gamelan music. The fourth side of the recording is devoted to an eighth-century Japanese *Ceremonial Prelude*, with the strange title of Etenraku, heard in a modern orchestration. Its cumulative weirdness is fascinating and it affords an interesting study of musical sound quite unfamiliar to Occidental ears. This is a record that all admirers of symphonic music should hear.

Bruckner and Mahler

Bruckner and Mahler, who possessed many traits in common, never have become popular figures in American concert halls, but they nevertheless command a definite and faithful, if comparatively small, following. Undoubtedly due to the efforts of the Bruckner Society, complete recordings of a few of their most important works have appeared within the past few years. The Bruckner *Fourth* and *Seventh Symphonies*, sponsored by Victor (sets M-331 and M-276), are of a high quality. There are recent H. M. V. sets of the *Fifth* and the unfinished *Ninth*, presumably intended for later domestic release. The *Overture in D minor*, recorded by Decca, is in our estimation decidedly inferior Bruckner; the best part of this recording is its fourth side—a rousing performance of Glinka's *Russian and Ludmilla Overture*.

Of Mahler, we have the *Second Symphony*, in *C minor*, (Victor set M-256) and his deeply impressive *Das Lied von der Erde* (Colum-

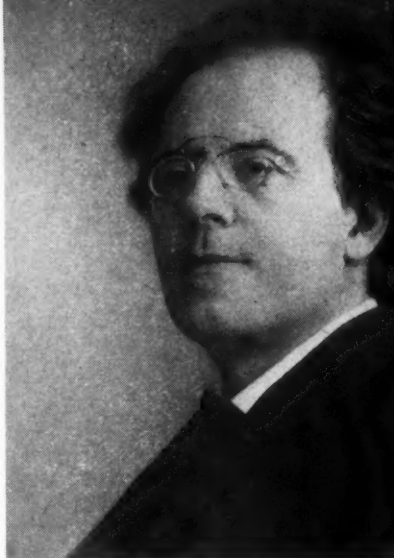
Mahler when he was
in New York

bia set 300), both recorded at public performances. The latter was directed by Bruno Walter, a disciple of Mahler and a most sympathetic interpreter. Both sets should satisfy the most ardent Mahlerites, who have further cause for rejoicing in the recent H. M. V. recording of the lengthy *Ninth Symphony* (really a historical recording since it was Walter's farewell with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra). It is to be hoped that a modern recording of the deeply felt and intensely personal *Kindertotenlieder* will be brought forward in the not too distant future.

One of our most treasurable experiences in the concert hall came some years ago when Eugene Goossens conducted the New York Symphony Orchestra in a performance of Manuel de Falla's suite, *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, the piano part played by a newly arrived European artist of high reputation, Walter Gieseking. It was thrilling, and we look forward to hearing it again, perhaps on Columbia records. Until last season, when Barbirolli revived the work with the able Arthur Rubinstein as the assisting pianist, it had been heard only on a couple of widely separated occasions. This suite, generally regarded as Falla's best purely symphonic composition, is subtly rhythmic and richly colorful. The important piano part, while difficult enough to require the services of a first-rank artist, is used only to heighten the color and texture of the work as a whole. Halffter's recording (Columbia set 156) has been criticized for lagging tempi, but the composer himself has commended it. Unfortunately the reproduction is badly dated when compared to modern releases, and the suite merits a modern recording. Some time ago, it was rumored that the Boston "Pops" would undertake this task with Sanroma at the keyboard, but it seems to have been just a rumor.

Roger-Ducasse

About eight years ago French H. M. V. made a recording of Roger-Ducasse's *Sarabande* for orchestra and small mixed choir. It was not brought out here, but we hastened to acquire this disc and today it was one of the most highly treasured in our collection. Coppola's conducting lacked the finished definition of the Toscanini performances we have heard, but generally speaking his performance is satisfactory. Unfortunately this record has been withdrawn. Considering the brevity of the work and its fervently expressed musical sensibility, it is not unreasonable to hope that in some future recording session Toscanini will give it living projection again. Its ingen-



ious contrast of moods is deftly expressed and its elegiac beauty is almost unforgettable. There is a program: a dying prince has requested that his people sing and play a sarabande that he particularly loves. As his soul takes flight the voices of those singing the sarabande unite with the chanting of the priests and the melodious chiming of the bell. It is not essential to use voices in a performance of this work: the composer states that the choir may be replaced by clarinets behind the scenes.

Among other important compositions either never before done or badly in need of modern recording may be mentioned Loeffler's *A Pagan Poem* and *Memories of My Childhood*, the first capturing so beautifully the mood of Virgil, from whose *Eight Eclogue* it is drawn, and the latter presenting a nostalgic picture of a Russian village. Then there is Butterworth's *A Shropshire Lad*, redolent of the English countryside. It is one of the finest orchestral rhapsodies of modern times, delicately fashioned and exquisitely hued; it was written by a young British composer who was cut off at thirty-one by the World War. Beecham has played it here several times, and on his last visit we were fortunate in obtaining a private recording of his last performance with the New York Philharmonic.

A new *Daphnis and Chloe Suite No. 2* is badly needed. Modern recording should do notable justice to this music, and Koussevitzky should be allowed the privilege of re-recording his splendid reading. Speaking of Ravel, one is reminded of Stokowski's recording of

the *Rapsodie espagnole* (Victor discs 8282-83). For sheer gorgeousness of sound we know nothing quite equal to this recording, in which the brilliant instrumentation is superbly realized by the genius of the conductor. Knowing Stokowski's interest in reproduction, we would not be surprised if he manipulated his own tone controls in this recording, and even though some claim he exaggerates the tonal characteristics of his woodwinds, it must be said he creates an amazing effect. Here is a recording for the exploitation of tonal coloring; your friends will be immensely impressed if they have not heard it. Ravel had a unique gift for writing piano pieces and then making orchestral transcriptions which added to rather than detracted from them. One thinks of his plaintive *Pavane*, and in passing expresses the hope that a modern orchestral recording be made of it.

One of the composers of this generation who has been acclaimed in both his native England and America is William Walton. Ever the champion of British composers, English Decca has recorded his *Symphony* and his *Viola Concerto*, both giving marked evidence of a most unusual talent. Victor has contributed the overture *Portsmouth Point* (disc 4327) and the pungently witty *Facade* (discs 12034-35) in the purely orchestral version (English Decca having previously done it with the original recitation of Sitwell's droll verses). All of these have been quite adequately set forth. One of Walton's most impressive works is *Belshezzar's Feast* for baritone, chorus and orchestra. It is remarkable for the effects attained with the chorus, and by all means should be given a recording.

A Musical Satirist

Sergei Prokofieff has given the world a considerable output of music. Primitive emotions, satire, prankishness and even buffoonery are all to be found in his music. It has too all the well-being of a healthy, happy athlete. Albert Wolff gave us a recording of the witty suite from the composer's ballet, *Chout*, on Polydor discs, and Albert Coates has given us a fine performance of his ballet, *Le Pas d'acier* (*The Age of Steel*) on Victor discs (nos. 11446-47). More compelling and impressive are the *Lt. Kije Suite* and *Peter and the Wolf*, owing to the magnificent recording and superb playing of Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony.

Wit and satire abound in the charming suite formed by Zoltan Kodaly from his comic opera *Hary Janos*, based on a legendary Hun-

garian character on the order of Baron Münchhausen. The single deviation from the satirical mood is the movement called *Intermezzo*, which is merely a typical czardas. Eugene Ormandy, himself a Hungarian, leads the Minneapolis Symphony in a felicitous performance of this work (Victor set M-197).

Perhaps no composer of the modern school has aroused so great a stir in musical circles as the young Russian Dimitri Shostakovitch. He has both partisans and opponents. His *First Symphony*, *Op. 10* (Victor set M-192, Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra), has gradually found its way into the repertoire after Stokowski and Toscanini set the stage. It is music of strength and virility, with rugged outlines and the self-assuring swagger of a muscular youth. The recording does justice to the work despite the fact that it dates back a few years.

We had occasion to mention, in an earlier paragraph, the joyous *Fifth Symphony* of Schubert, usually side-tracked by conductors for yet another performance of the *Unfinished*. Mark the *Fifth* down in your list of "must-haves". It is full of some of the most enjoyable melodic measures that Schubert ever conceived. Sir Thomas Beecham in his performance of this work (Columbia set 366) conveys a love for it which is irresistible to the listener. Here once again Sir Thomas has added another triumph to his imposing list of superlative recording performances. Then there is the composer's even less known *Fourth Symphony* ("*Tragic*"), which Barbirolli recorded recently (Victor set M-562). It too is worth more than a bowing acquaintance. The reproduction tends towards overbrilliance, but Barbirolli gives one of his better performances here, although it suffers by comparison with Beecham's greater subtlety and sensitivity.

On French Music

We are indebted to the French recording companies for many interesting items off the main track, particularly of French music, and to domestic Columbia for making available not only the releases of its old affiliate but also the bulk of the Pathé record catalogue. We can recall such works as Florent Schmitt's *La Tragedie de Salomé*; Grétry's delightful French Revolution ballet music—*La Rosière Republicaine* (Columbia discs 17067-68D) (for full story on this music see issue of July, 1936), and the same composer's *Danses Villageoises*; Ibert's colorful *Escapes* (Col. set X-16); Roussel's *Festin d'Araignée* with its

delicate and pungent humor, its grace and subtlety (Columbia set X-23); Fauré's *Ballade*, for piano and orchestra (Columbia set X-62); and Milhaud's ingenious ballet scores — *La Création du Monde* (Columbia set X-18) and *Les Songes* (Columbia discs 17038-39D). It is true the quality of reproduction in some of these selections is not wholly satisfactory but we believe that many of them will prove more than adequate for enjoyment of the music once they are repressed onto Columbia's new and much finer reproducing material. The Grétry scores, the Roussel work and the Fauré *Ballade* can assuredly be recommended if offered on the new material.

Grieg has been called a master of the smaller forms. His great melodic gift is evident in all his writings, and one of his most ingratiating examples is the suite *In Holberg's Time*, for string orchestra. Holberg was a famous writer and musician of the 18th century and in his own individual style Grieg has invested the suite with an archaic flavor, each movement being based on the dance rhythms of Holberg's period. Radio audiences should be fairly familiar with this music. Several months ago both H.M.V. and English Decca brought out recordings that met with critical approval. No doubt domestic release is only a matter of a short time.

The Russian Liadoff

The Russian composer Anatol Liadoff confined himself also to the smaller forms. He is perhaps best known for his orchestral setting of eight Russian folk tunes, available in recordings by Stokowski and Coates. This is a delightful score, full of whimsy, wit and plangent yearning. The Stokowski performance (Victor discs 8491-1681) has the advantage of improved reproduction, but we think the Coates (Victor discs 9797-98) shows a keener insight into the music. Among Liadoff's miniature pieces, founded on Russian legends, is an atmospheric work—*The Enchanted Lake*—that might be called a Russian counterpart of Wagner's *Forest Murmurs* from *Siegfried*. A favorite of Koussevitzky, it is the subject of one of his finest recordings (Victor disc 14078). A recording by Coates some years ago is no longer available, but there is a Decca disc by the Stor Symphony Orchestra, which can only be described as fair, even if one is fortunate enough to acquire a good record.

Among American compositions on discs, we have good recordings of Carpenter's *Skyscrapers* (Victor set M-130), and his *Adventures In a Perambulator* (Victor set M-



238); Deems Taylor's *Through the Looking Glass* (Columbia set 350); and, of course, MacDowell's "Indian" *Suite* (Columbia set 373). *Skyscrapers* seems somewhat dated today, but it is still lots of fun. *Adventures In a Perambulator* is delightful whimsy, appropriately sentimental; and the Taylor score is unpretentious and fanciful. The grim reality of Europe today recalls Schelling's *Victory Ball*, with its stark realism and its effective dissonance. The recording, by Mengelberg, is dated today, so we must pass it over. Another orchestral work from an American, excellently recorded, is Griffes' *Pleasure Dome of Kubla Khan* (Victor disc 7957), an atmospheric composition reminiscent of certain French scores. There is also Aaron Copland's colorful and stimulating *El Salon Mexico* (Victor set M-546). Among the younger Americans there are several whose music could be investigated with profit by the recording companies. These include the talented Samuel Barber, whose *Adagio* for strings, played for the first time by Toscanini with the NBC Symphony last winter, would make a splendid single disc; the sensitive and expert Anis Fuleihan, whose prismatic *Mediterranean Suite* has found growing favor with conductors; and the gifted William Schuman, whose *Prologue* for chorus and orchestra aroused enthusiasm in two recent performances in New York.

Although Richard Strauss is a most familiar figure on orchestral programs, several of his large scale works are given only rare performances. One of these is the *Sinfonia Domestica*. This is a somewhat pretentious composition designed to illustrate the happy domestic atmosphere of a small family—father, mother and child. It is generally believed that Strauss had in mind his own family when he wrote it. The music is typically Straussian and is a mixture of inspiration and banality. The sole recording (Victor set M-520) was done by Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra. His interpretation emphasizes the dramatic structure of the work rather than its inherently intimate atmosphere, as Strauss himself does in his performance of this music. The set, however, is a superb example of the tonal powers of a great orchestra and of modern recording at its best. Two early works of Strauss deserve modern recording; they are his tone-poem *Macbeth* and his symphony *Aus Italien*. The latter contains one of the most poetic slow movements Strauss has given us.

Too Seldom Heard

In view of Tchaikowsky's immense popularity, it might be expected that conductors would feel no hesitancy in offering more of his less frequently symphonic works, but such seems not the case. Performances of the first three symphonies and the suites (except for the *Nutcracker*) are rarely encountered. We have heard the *Second* and *Third Symphonies* a few times and find them of considerable interest. Discerning collectors therefore should not overlook their good luck in having available the splendid Victor recording of the *Third* (Victor set M-166), sometimes called the *Polish Symphony*, played by the alert and dynamic Coates, and the dramatic overture-fantasy *Hamlet* (Victor set M-395), given an eloquent reading by the same Coates. Both these recordings are several years old, but on a modern phonograph the reproduction is entirely satisfactory. The *Manfred Symphony* is long overdue in a recording, and the *Theme and Variations* from the *Third Suite*, although available in England, has never been released here. This tuneful suite might be recorded in its entirety under more modern conditions.

Few know that Bizet wrote a symphony in his youth. We heard a radio performance of it a year ago and found it a curiously in-

teresting and melodious piece of music, albeit with echoes of Mozart, Schubert, Mendelssohn and others. Despite this fact, its youthful naiveté intrigued us and at the time we felt that H. M. V. had been justified in recording it.

Interest in the ballet has taken a surprising leap during the past several years, owing principally to the excellent performances of the far-travelling Monte Carlo Ballet Russe. It is but natural that the real dyed-in-the-wool ballet fans would turn to records for much of the music used by the company and that the recording concerns would respond to the demand. The scores are of a varied sort. The companies have issued most of the music presented by the Monte Carlo Ballet Russe and there would seem to be a field for it. Of all these we found most interesting a set of short piano pieces by Emanuel Chabrier, orchestrated and employed as the accompaniment to the ballet called *Cotillon*. The music, light and effervescent in nature, has character and substance and never descends to triviality. It is a refreshing score which promises to wear well. Columbia has made a worthy recording of this music (set X-113); it is conducted by Antal Dorati, one of the Monte Carlo Ballet's conductors. The tonal quality of the discs compares favorably with the best. They are recommended to those in search of something lively and engaging.

* * *

We realize that our first Adventure in Record Collecting covers a lot of territory, and it can hardly be expected that any interested reader will be able to acquire many of the recommended works very quickly. However, just as one does not visit all the byways and country lanes all at once, even though one knows they are there, so one hardly buys (particularly these days) all the recordings in which one may be interested. Generally we consult our map, or some guide book, and plan many and different trips, and so we ask those who have been interested in our journeys through the bypaths of recorded music, and who feel that they would like to follow up some of our suggestions, to do likewise with their recorded music. Plan to hear several of the works we've recommended each time you visit your dealer. If you do, we not only believe but we definitely know you will find your record library containing some new and decidedly worthwhile selections.

CHOOSING A PICKUP

ROBERT S. LANIER

PART ONE

THE MINGLED HEADACHES AND REWARDS that go with building sound reproducers at home, in hopes of new musical satisfaction, are probably most mingled when it comes to choosing a pickup from those now on the market. Amplifier designs are available today that will do almost anything the experimenter wants of them; loud-speakers, though far from "perfect" theoretically, can with care in baffling be made entirely satisfactory over the audible range; but the pickups the amateur of moderate resources is able to acquire are generally subject to one or more faults which interfere with the realization of the quality the hopeful experimenter is aiming for.

To understand the nature and relative importance of these faults it is necessary to investigate the working principles of the pickup: a knowledge of these principles should be valuable to every record fan. The two main types of pickups at present available, the magnetic and the crystal, work on entirely different principles.

The magnetic pickup depends on the most usual method of generating electricity, whether in the superpower plant supplying a whole region with light and power, or in a gadget for supplying the lights on a bicycle. A coil of wire is made to move through a magnetic field, and this motion of the wire across the magnetic "flux" creates an electric current in the wire. This electric current is made dependent on the motion of a phonograph needle in two ways: by having the needle displace the magnetic field so that it cuts a stationary coil; and by having the needle move a coil back and forth in a stationary field.

Because the first method is more rugged in construction, and more easily creates large amounts of power, it has been the one most often used in lower priced pickups. Its usual construction is this—a flat armature, or "iron,"

is attached above the needle pivot, and moves more or less freely in a magnetic gap. A coil is also placed in or near the gap, so that any disturbance of the magnetic flux bridging the gap will "cut" the turns of the coil. When the armature swings to one side, following the needle, this disturbance of the magnetic field takes place, and electric power is created. When it swings to the other side, a similar potential is created, but the current flows in the other direction. The amount of current created depends on the size of the armature, the power of the magnet, and the speed of motion of the armature.

The "moving coil" type of magnetic pickup employs a tiny coil of wire attached to the needle structure and located in the magnetic gap. When this coil oscillates to follow the needle, the turns of the coil cut the magnetic lines of flux, and again a current is created.

The most important shortcomings of magnetic pickup have been: (1) excessive weight on the record; (2) high needle "impedance", that is, resistance to sidewise motion, made up of both the stiffness of the moving system and its mass; (3) peaks in the electrical response; (4) lack of ability at both high and low frequencies; (5) and a very troublesome resonance of the vibrating structure well within the audible frequency range.

These faults are in the main the results of design compromises. For instance, it is obviously necessary that the needle follow the groove exactly, and the easiest way to maintain "coupling" between needle and groove is to make the pickup heavy. Again, it is desirable, especially from the commercial point of view, that the pickup have as large an output as possible, in order to save the expense and complication of extensive amplification. But large output means either a heavy armature (high needle impedance), a very powerful magnet (expensive and heavy), or a very large coil (expensive and bulky). The mass of the vibrating structure, which should be large for

a high output, but extremely small for good high frequency response and lack of resonance in the audible range, has been one of the most difficult aspects of the magnetic pickup to design satisfactorily. A heavy needle structure means high needle impedance, which besides its complicating resonance in the medium high range, has the ability to wipe the high frequencies off a wax record with great thoroughness.

The crystal pickup depends on the piezo-electric effect. Certain crystal structures, when subjected to mechanical stress, will develop an electrical potential on their surfaces. Rochelle salt crystals have this ability in far greater degree than most other crystals, and have therefore been used almost universally in pickups. The usual structure of the crystal pickup embodies a lever arrangement which transmits the needle motion to one end of a thin slab of crystal, the other end of the crystal being held firmly in the housing. An electrode on each side of the slab picks up the electric potentials generated by the motion.

The needle impedance of a crystal pickup can be kept small while a relatively high output is maintained, and there is not a strong resonant point due to vibrating mass, in the mid-high frequency range. Besides this, the frequency range of a crystal is considerably longer than that of the average magnetic pickup.

Its Faults

At first sight this looks like the answer to the pickup question. However, the present day crystal, in the low and medium priced pickups, has failed to satisfy many experimenters because of: a tendency to severe peaks; variability with age, temperature, humidity; bad balance between bass and treble ranges; a frequency range still too short for contemporary quality standards.

Besides the crystal and magnetic pickups, other are conceivable, although for various reasons not available. For instance, a condenser pickup is a possibility. This would not be a generator of electric power, but a device consisting of a tiny condenser whose electrical capacity would be varied by the motion of the needle. The condenser being a part of a vacuum-tube circuit, it would produce variations that could be amplified and converted to sound. The writer is not aware of any experiments with such a pickup, although it would be an interesting attempt for anyone with the requisite knowledge and laboratory facilities.

The reader may have reached a glum state

of mind about the pickup question, and may wonder how one ever enjoys recorded music at all. The truth is, as already indicated, that pickups seem bad because they are suffering from technical lag, as compared to amplifiers and loudspeakers. The desirable level of quality in recorded music is a highly variable and personal matter. The writer spent more than two years listening to symphonic music on an acoustic portable phonograph, without any consciousness of impairment of his pleasure. When this venerable machine gave way before the first electric reproducer, naturally the older machine became completely unsatisfactory in quality.

Thus it happens that progress in sound technique has made the pickup standards of yesterday unacceptable, both aurally and theoretically, to experimenters who have had any taste of the quality now possible. A renewal of activity in the improvement of pickups in the last two years has served rather to heighten this dissatisfaction than to dissolve it, providing a stimulus for great hope and speculation. A number of new and improved pickups are currently appearing, with promise of more to come. It is therefore useful to enquire, what characteristics should be demanded of a pickup for home use at the present time?

Its Frequency Response

From the electrical point of view, it should have a substantially flat response from about 200 cycles to at least 7000. This upper limit is set because the present commercial records are cut off somewhere in that neighborhood, with nothing but noise above it. However, if the builder has a little more money to spend, if his outfit has an effective high frequency filter, and if he wants to anticipate improvements in recording, or has access to records made with something better than commercial quality standards, a pickup reaching further up can be demanded. Below 200 cycles, a boost is necessary, and this can be built into the pickup or can be a part of the amplifier. Harmonic distortion should of course be very low, on the order of 2% to 5%, and better if lower.

Mechanically, the most important characteristic is a low needle impedance. This means a very small and light vibrating structure; the traditional disadvantage of such structures has been low output, but amplifier technique makes this unimportant at the present time. Very light mechanisms have also been avoided because they are inclined to be delicate, causing numerous breakdowns under

the kind of use encountered in some locations. But the record user interested in real quality should be expected to give his pickup a reasonable amount of care, on a par with that given willingly to a fine watch.

Since the needle impedance determines the amount of weight necessary to keep the needle in the groove, a pickup with low mechanical impedance should also be light on the point of the needle. It should be noted that a pickup with a stiff needle needs considerable weight, and attempts to reduce record wear with such a pickup, by counterbalancing the arm, will only result in destroying the coupling between needle and groove, with serious distortion as the result.

Thus the desirable needle mechanism is extremely small and light: the average steel needle itself has too much mass for the ideal pickup, so that we should look forward to pickups with very small built-in jewel points (not jewel points that you take in and out).

For the present, of course, most of us will be forced to use interchangeable steel needles.

If the vibrating mechanism is small enough, its primary resonance will no longer cause any trouble, since it will be high up out of the audible frequency range. The resonance of a well-designed high quality pickup should be at 15,000 cycles or above.

The head should of course be offset for better tracking, and the arm should have absolutely no resonance in the audible range. Arm resonance is another prime cause of record wear. Finally, the pivots, both for horizontal and vertical motion, should be substantially without play and friction.

Are then any pickups available that measure up to such a set of specifications? The next article will discuss the various makes now on the market, and try them against our ideal picture.

(To be Continued)

A NOTE ON WALTER DAMROSCH

■ When Walter Damrosch steps before the microphone on Friday, October 13th, and his familiar greeting, "Good afternoon, my young friends!" goes over the airways, he will be beginning his twelfth year on the radio with his broadcasts of music appreciation courses. At seventy-seven this dean of American conductors is still active, contributing to the musical culture of America, providing musical entertainment for its people, and working diligently for music's interests and for those who pursue it as a career. For over fifty years Damrosch has been an alert and busy propagandist for the cause of good music.

His long service to music in America has earned for him the sobriquet of "Papa" Damrosch; indeed one can truthfully say that his approach to music today is much like a venerable parent's to one of his dearest children. While neither forcefully commanding nor inspirational stimulating, he is respectfully regarded for his adherence to tradition and his friendly dependability in his chosen art.

Born in Breslau, Silesia, on January 30, 1862, Damrosch was brought to this country in his ninth year. From his father, Leopold Damrosch, he received his early training in music and his love of the classics. Leopold Dam-

rosch was a violinist and conductor of note. His enterprising efforts and his organizing abilities are said to have given a tremendous impetus to the musical life of America. In the last fourteen years of his life, from 1871 to 1885, he acted as conductor to the Arion Society, formed the Symphony Society, and directed the Metropolitan Opera for a season (1884-85). His Wagner performances were called "epoch making," and his concert presentations of Berlioz' *Requiem*, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, and Berlioz' *Damnation of Faust* (which he introduced for the first time to this country) were eulogistically received by critics and public alike.

Walter Damrosch followed his father for two seasons at the Metropolitan as an assistant to Director Stanton. Owing to his efforts such great artists as Lehmann, Alvary, Fisher and Seidl were engaged for the Metropolitan; thus he helped to contribute to a most impressive period of that institution's history. During the summer of 1887 Damrosch made the acquaintance of Hans von Bülow, with whom he studied Beethoven's nine symphonies. After his second operatic season, the conductor retired from the Metropolitan

and began his long work with the New York symphony, directing it up to his retirement in 1927, when the orchestra was consolidated with the New York Philharmonic.

Whether Damrosch has conducted Beethoven's *Ninth* more often than any other living conductor it would be difficult to say, but it is fairly certain that he has played it more often for American audiences than anyone else. He has performed the work upon many notable occasions, such as last spring at the opening concerts at the New York World's Fair, in a first American Beethoven cycle in 1909, and both in New York and Paris, upon the celebration of the centennial of the work in 1924.

If your grandparents heard symphony or operatic music in this country, ten to one they heard Walter Damrosch. He is credited with bringing musical performances to many communities from coast to coast that never before heard good music. In 1895 he formed his own opera company, introducing such singers as Milka Ternina, Lillian Nordica and David Bispham. In 1900 he again conducted at the Metropolitan. *Parsifal* was first presented to American audiences by this enterprising musician, as were *Samson and Dalilah* and Gluck's *Orfeo*. Among the instrumental artists who made their American debut under his direction were Fritz Kreisler, Paderewski, and Saint-Saëns. And among the instrumental works that he first played here were Tschai-kowsky's *Pathétique Symphony*, Brahms' *Fourth Symphony*, Chabrier's *Symphony* and Vaughan Williams' *London Symphony*.

As A Lecturer

Damrosch gave musical appreciation courses before he came to radio. His lectures on Wagner and Beethoven were well known and attended for many years. So famous were they, that when the Columbia Company celebrated the Beethoven Centennial in 1927 with the issuance of many recordings, Damrosch was asked to record a short explanatory lecture on the *Eroica* at the piano.

Damrosch was never very successful on records. Over ten years ago he made a recording of Brahms' *Second Symphony* with his own New York Symphony. But recording at that time was too much at one level to do the conductor full justice; the set was not long in the record catalogue. Later he made some recordings for Victor with the National Symphony Orchestra (his radio organization); these included a three-part recording of *Airs de ballet* by Gluck and a Bach *Gavotte in D* (from the

solo cello *Suite No. 6*) in an arrangement by his father (Victor discs 7321/22), and *Ballet Music* from Saint-Saëns' *Henry VIII* (Victor discs 7292/93). The Gluck was a real contribution to the phonograph and contained some lovely selections from the dance music of various operas.

Among conductors of today, said Carleton Smith recently in *Coronet*, Damrosch "is the best known voice in America," which can be taken two ways. It is true, we know few conductors' voices, but everyone knows Damrosch's. He has always been his own radio commentator. Alec Templeton and children may imitate his over-precise manner of speaking, but despite this fact everybody respects him for his fatherly veneration of and his heart-warming approach to his chosen art.

—P. H. R.

OVERTONES

■ The Columbia Recording Corporation this past month announced a new Columbia popular record with bright red labels, at 50c, differing only in price from the 75c record. The artists to be heard under this new red label include: Benny Goodman, Kay Kyser, Horace Heidt, Harry James, Gene Krupa, Duke Ellington, Eddy Duchin, Jack Teagarden, Raymond Scott, Martha Raye, Ray Noble and Teddy Wilson.

With the release of the *Handel Organ Concerto No. 10 in D minor*, says Mr. O'Connell of RCA-Victor, "we begin a series of recordings of organ which will cover the entire classic literature. After searching the entire country we have found what we believe to be the ideal organ, which is located in the Germanic Museum of Harvard University. This instrument is virtually a duplicate of the organ of Bach's time except that it has modern electro-pneumatic action." E. Power Biggs, who is in sole charge of the organ, is to be the organist for this series of records. Mr. Biggs, an Englishman by birth and training, is an American citizen.

Victor announces that the Coolidge Quartet has been engaged to record the complete series of Beethoven's quartets. By special arrangement with the artists, their Beethoven recordings will be issued at \$1.50 a record instead of the usual \$2.00.

The New Friends of Music have announced the complete programs for the 16 Sunday afternoon concerts to be given at Town Hall, New York City, beginning on October 29. This is the fourth season of noteworthy chamber music recitals to be instituted by this pioneering organization, of which Ira A. Hirschmann is president. Once again the series of programs will be heard in part on the radio. The concerts begin at 5:30 P. M., EST; the radio broadcasts begin, however, at 6:00 P. M., lasting about one hour (NBC networks).

The program for October 29 features the Pro Arte Quartet, William Primrose (viola), and Ellen Stone (French horn), in Mozart's *Viola Quintet in G minor, K. 516*; Mozart's *Horn Quintet in E fl., K. 407*; and Brahms' *Viola Quintet in G major, Op. 111*. The program of November 5 features the Pro Arte Quartet, Marcel Maas (piano), and Mr. Primrose, in Brahms' *Clarinet Trio in A minor, Op. 114*, Mozart's *Duo for Violin and Viola, K. 423*, and Mozart's *Quintet in E flat, K. 614*.

* * *

Ronald Wise, formerly in charge of the Masterwork section of the Columbia Recording Corporation, has joined the Red Seal staff of the Recording and Record Sales section of RCA-Victor.

EUROPEAN RECORD RELEASES

England

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 1*; Mengelberg and Concertgebouw Orchestra. Telefunken SK2770/2.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 5*; Toscanini and NBC Sym. Orch. H.M.V. DB3822/5.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 8*; Mengelberg and Concertgebouw Orchestra. Telefunken SK2760/2.

BOUGHTON: *The Faery Song (The Immortal Hour)*; and GERMAN: *The English Rose (Merrie England)*; Webster Booth (tenor) with orch. H.M.V. B8947.

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 1*; Weingartner and London Sym. Orch. Columbia LX833/7.

CHABRIER: *Marche Joyeuse*; and MEYERBEER: *Coronation March (Le Prophète)*; Lambert and London Phil. Orchestra. H.M.V. C3112.

CHOPIN: 28 *Mazurkas*; Arthur Rubinstein. H.M.V. DB3802/08.

CHOPIN: *Impromptu in F sh.*; and *Prelude No. 4*; Lili Kraus. Parlophone R20451.

CHOPIN: *Etude in A fl., Op. 25, No. 1*; and

LISZT: *Gnomenreigen*; John Davies. H.M.V. BD738.

DEBUSSY: *Mouvement (Images, Set 1, No. 3)*; and *Cloches à travers les feuilles (Images, Set 2, No. 1)*; Walter Gieseking. Columbia LB56.

GRIEG: *Peer Gynt Suite No. 1*; Beecham and London Phil. Orch. Col. LX838.

HAYDN: *Concerto for Trumpet and Orch.*; Geo. Eskdale and Sym. Orch. Col. DX993.

IRELAND: *Trio No. 3 in E*; Grinke Trio. Decca X242/4.

LISZT: *Vallée d'Obermann*, and *Sonetto No. 47 del Petrarca*; Anatol Kitain. Columbia DX934/5.

LISZT: *Tarantelle*; Edward Kilenyi. Columbia LX840.

MOZART: *Divertimento in D, K. 334*; Lener Quartet with Audrey and Dennis Brain. Columbia LX841/5.

MOZART: *The Magic Flute - O Isis and Osiris*; and ROSSINI: *Barber of Seville - La Calumnia*; Oscar Natzke. Parlophone E11423.

SCHUBERT: *Unfinished Symphony*; E.I.A.R. Sym. Orch. dir. Parodi. Parl. E11419/21.

SCHUMANN: *Carnaval Suite*; Claudio Arrau. Parlophone R20448/50.

SCHUMANN: *Three Romances, Op. 94*; and FRANCK: *Pièce*; Leon Goossens (oboe). Columbia DX936/7.

TSCHAIKOWSKY: *Andante cantabile*; New Hungarian Qt. H.M.V. C3106.

WAGNER: *Flying Dutchman Overture*; Abendroth and Berlin Phil. Orch. Parl. E11422.

WAGNER: *Lohengrin - Love Duet*; Tiana Lemnitz and Torsten Ralf. H.M.V. DB4667.

WALTON: *Facade Suite*; Orch. Raymonde. Columbia DX938.

* * *

Alec Templeton, the pianist who is recognized as one of today's cleverest musical caricaturists, has been signed to record exclusively for Victor. His first release (Victor disc 26348) combines a hilarious musical sketch depicting the experimental tinkering of the owner of a new radio with an original piano composition called *Hazy and Blue*. Apparently Templeton's records will contain one caricature with a piano solo on its reverse face, since his second record contains *And Angels Sing* (as it might be presented at the Metropolitan Opera House) coupled with a piano version of Carmichael's *Star Dust*. If the gentlemen involved do not mind we should like to have Mr. Templeton's caricatures of Dr. Damrosch introducing *The Three Little Fishies* and Bing Crosby singing *My Heart at thy Sweet Voice*.

EDITORIAL NOTES

■ The ominous news from Europe stirs everyone in this country. What lies ahead none can truly predict. And though we strive to preserve neutrality, it is not possible, as has been pointed out by the President, to remain mentally aloof from a situation as acute and as far-reaching as a world war. At present, there is quite naturally a strong aversion in this country to the whole of the totalitarian program, and more especially to one leader's policies. So far, this does not embrace an aversion to the people under the totalitarian regime; but unless constant warnings are sounded the feeling may gradually be intensified, until an aversion to the totalitarian state may become a hatred of its people, and not only of its people, but of all their works, cultural and otherwise. This is a war of democracy against totalitarianism, not a war of the England and French people against the German people. The distinction should be made, lest we find that aversion avalanching into a rejection of all things that are of German origin; a rejection that embraces German music simply because we have grown to hate German ideology, German government.

Several readers have written to us pleading that we say something about this. Each writer has been governed wholly by an honest love for music; the music of Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner, etc.

From A Letter

"With the impact of the European war, it occurs to me to wonder whether it would not be timely," says one correspondent, "to write an editorial recalling some of the excesses in musical circles in the last war. You will remember it got so bad that German music was no longer performed publicly and quantities of phonograph records of German music were destroyed. A plea should be made today, that regardless of what individual reactions may be as to the right or the wrong side of the present war, it should constantly be kept in mind that great art, especially as it concerns music, has nothing whatever to do with politics."

Music has been called a universal language. Its universality exists, however, only in the sense that all peoples of the earth have it in some form. Music of the Orient could hardly be termed universal. It is meaningless to most Occidental ears. The music of Europe comes

closer to being universal. There have been in recent years, some efforts to convey political convictions in music; but on the whole most European music known and revered by the people of Europe and this country has been free of political tinge. It might have its national characteristics, but outside of this its emotional content is, generally speaking, the expression of feelings of joy, happiness, sorrow and exaltation that all mankind shares.

Since the new German ideology has come into existence we daresay the truest appreciation of genuine German music has been manifested beyond the borders of the Reich. The claim of new Germany that Beethoven's symphonies in part reflect its present political outlook is not only asinine but a defamation of the Promethean philosophy of Beethoven. Similarly any claims that Wagner anticipated the totalitarian viewpoints of present-day Germany are egregiously silly: Wagner was a revolutionary at heart. It should not be forgotten that he was twice an exile from Germany, once because he participated in a rebellion against the government.

A Ban on Wagner

One reads in the newspapers that there is a movement on foot to ban the music of Wagner in England. We hope this is not true. If the hatred of the German state must include hatred of its people, its customs and its language too, surely it does not need to embrace its music. If the language offends, why not sing Wagner in English? It is high time that the opera houses of both England and America gave opera in their own language; in Germany all opera is sung in the vernacular. And similarly in France, and also in Italy and Russia.

Should one be willing to throw out the *Eroica Symphony* because recent German propaganda endeavored to convince people that Hitler was the man Beethoven had in mind when he wrote it? Or should one cease to play the great *C minor Symphony* because the political machine in Germany wishes to claim that it registers Hitler's protest against the "oppression" of the German people? The absurdity of such propaganda need not be stressed here. Beethoven protested against such a man as Hitler by tearing up his original dedication to Napoleon on his *Eroica Symphony*. His admiration for Napoleon

lasted a very short time. Perhaps the hero Beethoven had in mind was not even a Napoleon, but rather an exalted spirit closer to the glorification of his own idealized self—"the man who freed music", as Schauffler says.

A reader from Indianapolis recalls the end of Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*. "Do you remember how Mann tells of the words and music of Schubert's *Lindenbaum* running through Hans Castorp's head, as he disappears in the awfulness of war? Hans Castorp was German only because Mann chose to make him so; he might well have been any young man, anywhere." And Schubert's song might well be the song that any man would remember, if he was of a sensitive and fine-grained nature, as he advanced into the dreadful uncertainty of a maddened world of exploding shells.

... Of all the letters carved there
There's one I chiselled plain ...
Its waving branches whispered
A message in my ear—
'Your peace awaits you here' ...

Schubert wrote his song to a German poem, but its message is a universal one.

We are reminded by the above that Thomas Mann is a refugee from Nazi Germany, living at present in this country. We wonder if it is not possible for us to remember, as unquestionably he has done, that art, and especially music, has nothing to do with politics. When hatred reaches such an extent that we no longer can appreciate the music of a nation, it is we who are the sufferers. When Beethoven, Brahms and Wagner cease to appeal because they are of German origin, we have not only lost our appreciation of the universal scope of music, but we have placed a senseless deprivation upon ourselves.

The Death of Gilman

The death of Lawrence Gilman on the ninth of September removed from the world of music one of its foremost writers. Gilman was a man of letters as well as a fervent lover of music, a capable musician—a man who could write and speak on all the fine arts. One recalls the death of another great cultural leader, James Huneker, and the remark of an eminent writer at that time when someone, lamenting Huneker's death, said: "After Huneker, what?" "After Huneker there is Lawrence Gilman," came the ready response.

Gilman's thorough knowledge and appreciation of music were more widespread than his writings in recent years have indicated. His predilection for the music of certain com-

posers, notably Wagner, led him to write and rewrite with increasing fervor and artistic brilliance on his favorite themes. There is no question that this reiteration of his devotion for such music stimulated wider appreciation. Behind the effusiveness of his enthusiasm, there was rare insight and imagination. If that enthusiasm upon occasion seemed to run away with him, or caused him, as The London Times recently said in connection with his last book *Toscanini and Great Music*, "to use words loosely," it is easy to understand. The poet, and this Gilman assuredly was, speaks with exalted eloquence. His eulogies are intensified, ennobled by his enthusiasm. Poetic enthusiasm is a rare thing, and it is given to few to realize consistently as much of it as Gilman did in his writings on music. It may well be that his collected writings will become among the most sought-after and widely cherished books in the world of music.

The writer will always remember the kindly and helpful advice Gilman gave him when he first started to write on music.

An Apology

Apologies are due our readers for the excess of typographical errors in the September issue. Owing to the facts that two important members of our staff were away on vacation at the end of August and that the editor was taken ill at that time, it was necessary to entrust some of the editorial work to less reliable hands. The old expression "haste makes waste" is brought to mind. We were naturally anxious to have the magazine in the mails before Labor Day; had we waited until the holiday the errors would not have slipped through. We shall make every effort in the future to prevent a recurrence of this sort of thing.

On Bruno Walter

Our note on Bruno Walter last month brought us many letters asking us to do all in our power to get his fine recordings listed here. One of the sets that his host of American admirers seem to be most anxious to have released here is Schubert's *Symphony in C major*, which he made with the London Symphony Orchestra this past spring. Another recording wanted is his performance of Corelli's *Christmas Night Concerto*. Walter, we understand, will be heard again this year with the NBC Symphony Orchestra. Perhaps arrangements can be made to have him record some unusual scores from his rich and varied repertoire while he is in America.

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ism, which demonstrates in every note the unquestionable superiority of Victor Higher Fidelity Recording. You can hear it now, at your RCA Victor music merchant's. The Music Masterpiece of the Month... Concerto in D Major for Violin and Orchestra. Jascha Heifetz, violin, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, Conductor. Album M-581 (AM-581 for automatic operation) 9 sides, with descriptive booklet, \$9.00.

ARTURO TOSCANINI and THE NBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA play Beethoven and Paganini

Entitled "Encores", this album contains some of the works requested again and again since they were heard on the air performed by Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony Orchestra. They were recorded repeatedly, until finally the recording which thoroughly delighted Mr. Toscanini was achieved. The superb string choirs of the NBC Symphony Orchestra are brilliantly in evidence in this recording. This album consists of the Scherzo from Quartet in F Major by Beethoven, Moto Perpetuo by Paganini, Adagio from Quartet in F Major by Beethoven. Album M-590, 4 sides, with descriptive booklet, \$4.50.

RICHARD CROOKS, Sings Opera

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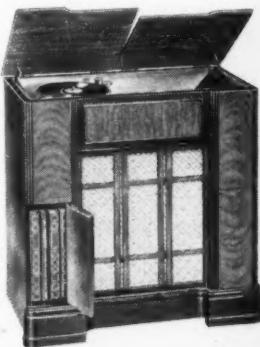
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NEW



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RECORD NOTES AND REVIEWS

ORCHESTRA

BEETHOVEN: *Scherzo* from *Quartet in F, Op. 135*; and PAGANINI: *Moto Perpetuum* (Victor disc 15547). BEETHOVEN: *Adagio* from *Quartet in F, Op. 135* (Victor disc 15548). Played by NBC Symphony Orchestra, direction Arturo Toscanini. Victor set M-590, price \$4.50.

■ Victor releases this music under the ambiguous title of *Encores*. The Beethoven excerpts have never, to our knowledge, been played by Toscanini as encores, nor for that matter has the Paganini.

The purist will probably decry the performance of the Beethoven music in an arrangement for string orchestra, but it has been our experience that each time Toscanini has played this music in the concert hall both his listeners and the assembled critics have been highly pleased. And indeed, they might well be, for Toscanini deftly points the elfin scherzo, and he plays the *Lento assai, cantante e tranquillo* (marked adagio on the record here) with a reverence that is in accord with its deeply emotional and truly religious feeling. The tempo at which he plays this movement seems juster than Busch's over-observance of the *lento assai* marking in the latter's recording of the quartet; in fact, Toscanini's tempo heightens and sustains the emotional reverence far more than does Busch's.

The Paganini piece is an *Allegro di Concerto* originally for violin and piano. It has been recorded by Menuhin with piano accompaniment, and in its orchestral arrangement by Ormandy. It is essentially music of objective virtuosity. The demands it makes upon its performers can hardly be exaggerated. Toscanini brings us a brilliant exploitation of massed string virtuosity in his performance here. It is said that the recording was made several times to realize the extraordinary precision and fluidity that the conductor demanded. That these qualities have been outstandingly achieved there can be no question. But whether the intrinsic values of the music warrants this display of interpretative brilliance will remain a question for each listener to decide. Personally, I find the music redundant and meaningless.

The recording here is the best we have had from Studio 8H in Radio City. There is none of the stridency of tone noticed in the Haydn symphony Toscanini recorded last year, and although there is none of the room-resonance associated with the recordings of the Philadelphia and Boston orchestras, the tonal quality is by no means lifeless. Too, the bass is richer and fuller than in previous recordings.

* * *

BIZET: *Carmen* (Suite arranged by Sir Thomas Beecham); played by the London Philharmonic Orch., direction Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia set X-144, two discs, price \$3.50.

■ Anyone who has heard Beecham conduct an opera will testify to the vivifying results he attains. Beecham, like many other famous conductors, owns a great admiration for *Carmen*. He probably has conducted it as often in the opera house as any other living conductor.

Here we have an arrangement made by Beecham of some of the music from *Carmen*. Although some may consider the order of the music decidedly arbitrary, none, I believe, will deny that Beecham conducts it with verve and finesse.

Part 1 contains the end of the *Prelude* (Fate Motive) and the *Prelude to Act 4* (Aragonaise); Part 2 includes *Prelude to Act 2* (Les Dragons d'Alcala) (disc 69689-D); Part 3 contains *Prelude to Act 3* and *Prelude to Act 1*; and Part 4, *Danse Boheme* from Act 2 with the vocal parts variously assigned to different instruments.

The recording here is full-bodied and richly resonant.

* * *

FRANCK: *Les Eolides* (Symphonic Poem) (3 sides); and COUPERIN (arr. Filippi): *Les petits moulin à vent*; *Soeur Monique*; *Le Trophée* (1 side); played by the Columbia Broadcasting Symphony, direction of Howard Barlow. Columbia set X-145, two discs, price \$3.50.

■ This symphonic poem was written in 1876, two years after Franck's revision of his

earlier symphonic poem, *Redemption*. The work antedates the *Variations symphoniques* by nine years and the composer's only symphony by a dozen. The opening lines of a poem by Leconte de Lisle are said to have inspired the music. Lawrence Gilman in his *Stories of Symphonic Music* gives the following translation of those lines:

"O floating breezes of the skies, sweet breaths of lovely spring, that with capricious kisses caress the hills and the plains!

"Virgins, daughters of Aeolus, lovers of peace, eternal Nature wakens to your songs!"

Despite its classical inspiration, Franck's music lies closer to his cathedral loft than to Olympian heights. There is an evasive quality to the score, occasioned no doubt by its consistent chromaticism. In its purely musical qualities it is neither as stirring as the symphony, nor as emotionally satisfying as the *Variations symphoniques*. However, there have been many requests for a recording of this music, and we feel certain that it will find a large audience.

The performance is an admirably lucid one, and the recording is consistently good.

Filippi's orchestrations of Couperin's picturesque clavessin pieces are somewhat heavy handed; particularly is this true of the first, *The Little Windmills*. It seems to me that Barlow could have found more desirable fillers-in than such transcriptions.

—P. H. R.

HANDEL: *Concerto Grosso No. 5, in D major, Op. 6*; played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Felix Weingartner. Columbia set X-142, two discs, price \$3.50.

■ Weingartner, having finished recording most of the major orchestral works of Beethoven, is now turning his attention elsewhere. Among the most interesting of his various projects is a series (whether or not a complete set) of the Handel *Concerti Grossi*. It must be something of a relief for a conductor to turn occasionally from the more self-conscious and ponderous music of Beethoven and his followers to such warm and wholesome fare as this. It seems that Weingartner finds it so, because his performance has an unexpected geniality and vigor. One cannot accuse him of being academic this time.

Of course anyone especially interested in the Handel *Concerti Grossi* must already own the Boyd Neel series as recorded by the English Decca Company. Neel seems definitely to have certain advantages over Weingartner, notably the unpretentious spirit of his performances. On the other hand Weingart-

ner has the advantage of superior recording. And because of his celebrated name and the fact that these Columbia records will be in general more easily obtainable and better surfaced than the Decca, Columbia X-142 is likely to reach a greater public. The set will give a good deal of pleasure, and perhaps lead some people to investigate the other orchestral works of Handel.

LULLY: *Atys: Air pour la Suite de Flore (Gavotte)* (1676); *Amadis: Menuet* (1684); *Prosperine: Menuet des Ombres Heureuses* (1680); *Thésée: Overture and Marche des Sacrificateurs* (1675); played by Orchestre Symphonique, conducted by Maurice Cauchie. Columbia set M-376, two 10-inch discs, price \$2.50.

■ This little collection of delightful and typical Lully, a sort of companion to Columbia's set X-117, was made by Pathé in France under the direction of Maurice Cauchie, and in both instances every effort has been made to present the music in a thoroughly authentic manner. There is not much more to be said about the music than that it is utterly charming. The orchestra, despite the imposing word "symphonique," is not an unduly large one, and happily it includes a harpsichord. The recording, while not of the very latest vintage, is very good. —P. M.

MOZART: *Symphony No. 41 in C Major, K 551 (Jupiter)*; played by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, direction of Bruno Walter. Victor set M-584, seven sides, price \$5.75.

■ Not long ago we had Beecham's splendid performance of this symphony. As enjoyable as that performance is, I find much in this one that is equally treasurable. There is no doubt that this is the better recording from a standpoint of clarity of detail and of a remarkable effect of the tonal spaciousness of a concert hall. In fact, I would be inclined to place it as the best all-around recording of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra on records. The "echo" that marred so many other performances by this splendid orchestra is not in evidence here. I am certain that Bruno Walter must admire this recording very much, and that he values it as one of the greatest souvenirs of his long association with the Vienna Philharmonic. The recording was made early in 1938.

Walter plays the first movement with admirable control. Although I miss the rhythmic contrast that Beecham makes in the sec-

and theme (so reminiscent of the music of *Figaro*), one cannot fail to admire the fluidity of Walter's playing. Beecham is more exciting in the first movement, his dynamic contrasts are greater, but his occasional rubati are less in keeping with the classical lines of the music. Walter brings more feeling to his second movement; the balance of parts here is admirably attained. And in the minuet the more spacious recording serves Walter better than the reproduction does in Beecham's case. Both Walter and Beecham do notable justice to the superb finale, but again the recording in this set helps in the definition of the exultant drive of the music.

There have been many discussions regarding the title by which this symphony has come to be widely known. Beyond a doubt it is an ambiguous one, yet Eric Blom feels that the last movement may be regarded as Jovian; but, he says, if Jove appears to us at all in this crowning finale, he "does not so as the thunderer, but as the maker of the world." This amazing fugal finale builds up with god-like splendor. It is assuredly the crowning achievement of Mozart's symphonic writing.

In the present recording, as in the Beecham set, no repeats are observed except in the minuet. The first and second movements are each allotted a single disc; the minuet, however, extends onto the sixth side, and the finale begins about midway. In the Beecham recording the minuet occupies a single side.

—P. H. R.

BACH: (arr. Cailliet): *Air for G String*; and BACH: (arr. O'Connell) *Come, Sweet Death*, played by the Victor Symphony Orchestra. Victor disc, 362233, price \$1.00.

■ The performances here are reserved, and the orchestral arrangements are dark-hued and sombre. Recording is excellent.

BIZET: *Carmen - Preludes to Act 1 and Act 4*; played by the Victor Symphony Orchestra. Victor 10-inch disc, 26352, price 75c.

■ These are good routine performances. Naturally the playing does not compare with Beecham's but neither does the price of the record. The *Prelude to Act 1* does not include the *Fate* music. Recording, obviously emanating from a studio, is satisfactory.

SUPPE: *Morning, Noon and Night in Vienna - Overture*; played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, direction Arthur Fiedler. Victor disc 12479, price \$1.50.

■ Franz von Suppé made his home and fame

in Vienna, but he was born in Dalmatia of Belgian and Italian parentage. His family name was Suppe-Demelli (without the accent). Like Johann Strauss he attained considerable fame with his comic operas, operettas, and concert overtures. His *Poet and Peasant Overture* has been played everywhere, and the present overture has probably been eclipsed in popularity only by it.

One cannot but admire Fiedler for the musicianly performance he turns in of this hackneyed music. His work here is as fresh and alive as though the music were something he was introducing for the first time. The recording is vital and dynamically of wide range, and though it may offer some problems to the user of non-metallic needles, we believe that no one will find it difficult to reproduce well with a metallic needle.

STRAVINSKY: *Pastorale*; and CHOPIN (freely transcribed by Stokowski): *Prelude in D minor, Op. 28, No. 24*; played by the Philadelphia Orch., direc. Leopold Stokowski. Victor 10-inch disc, 1998, price \$1.50.

■ As the sponsors of this record point out, Stravinsky's *Pastorale* is one of the shortest and most charming works he has written. In his autobiography, the composer describes this little work as a "song without words"; actually it is a vocalise for voice with wind quartet. Replacing the voice with the violin, Dushkin plays it on Columbia disc 17075-D with the original background—oboe, English horn, clarinet, and bassoon. The present recording sounds not unlike the Dushkin one, for strings replace the voice here also, suggesting that Stokowski has made use of only a few members of the orchestra.

In the Chopin prelude, Stokowski unleashes the full resources of a modern symphony orchestra. The poetic little piano piece is considerably inflated. It is all a matter of whether you like this sort of thing or not; Stokowski evidently does or he would not continue to arrange such music and play it. Recording in both selections is excellently devised.

—P. G.

CONCERTOS

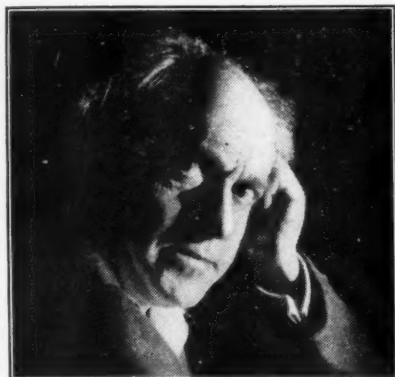
BLOCH: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*; played by Joseph Szigeti and the Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, Paris, direction Charles Munch. Columbia set M-389, four discs, \$6.00.

■ This month we have two important violin concerto recordings. Both make record history, albeit in different ways.

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Bloch can be said to come fully into his own with this recording, for the work ranks among his best scores. Begun in 1930 in California, his concerto was finally completed in 1938 in Switzerland. Its first performance was given on December 15, 1938 at Cleveland by Szigeti with the Cleveland Orchestra.

Unlike most of Bloch's great orchestral works, this one does not stem from any Jewish inspiration. Curiously, its opening theme is of American-Indian character, barbaric and lamentative. It plays a prominent part in the first two movements. The music of the opening movement is richly rhapsodic, impassioned and intense. Its constantly changing tonalities lend it an atonal character, as the annotator says, but the music is not modern in the sense that we call Schönberg's or Berg's modern. It is intensely human, fervently voiced, trenchant and wide-ranging emotionally. One would be inclined to term Bloch a neo-Romanticist; yet his frequent savagery and exoticism often belie that appellation. There is a massive, almost overwhelming sensuousness to this music, and an underlying firmness and robust vigor that exalt one spiritually as well as emotionally. The effect after hearing it is both elevating and depletive.

From the drama and excitement of his poignant opening movement, Bloch turns to a tender and plangent mood in his second. It is a song for the violin, exotic at times, nostalgic and visionary. There is a curious reminder of Debussy's *Fêtes* in the abstract close of this movement. The third movement opens with a dramatic and forceful attack from the whole orchestra, then in contrast the violin rejoins with a quiet reminder of the main subject of the first movement. This gives way to a quickened tempo and gayer feelings. Some of the writing here and again in the final pages recalls in mood the Englishman Vaughan Williams, but the affinity, if it exists at all, is a purely spiritual one. The annotator speaks of the lighter mood of the music here as being "Dvorak-like in accent and colorful high spirits." Perhaps, but Bloch digs deeper, even in his gayest moments. The elation of this last movement is irrefutable; and the final pages of this remarkable score are even more animated and joyous.

Szigeti plays this exacting music with flawless artistry, and the Paris Conservatory Orchestra under the direction of Charles Munch supports him brilliantly. The accomplishments of the players are splendidly matched by the recording, which is tonally full at the same time that it is brilliantly lucid and well balanced.

BRAHMS: *Concerto in D major, Op. 77*; played by Jascha Heifetz and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, direction of Serge Koussevitzky. Victor set M-581, nine sides price \$9.00.

■ Fifty years ago last January Joseph Joachim, one of the great violinists of all times, played this concerto for the first time in public. Brahms had written it for him the previous summer and fall. Of Joachim's performance, one writer has said: "he played with a love and devotion which brought home to us in every bar the direct or indirect share he had in the work. [Although it is known that Joachim gave Brahms advice in the writing of this work, it is generally denied that he altered any of the text as Brahms conceived it. Ed.] As to the reception, the first movement was too new to be distinctly appreciated by the audience, the second made considerable way, the last aroused great enthusiasm."

The newness of the first movement has worn off; people today do not need to be told that it is great music of its kind. The beauty of the second movement ever remains a memorable experience in the concert hall; and the passionate vigor of the finale, with its strong Hungarian fervor, has never ceased to arouse enthusiasm.

Victor tells us that this recording was "a labor of love". We can well believe it. The performance is superb in every way, and although the spotlight must be placed on Heifetz (as indeed it is in the recording), one should not forget the contribution that Koussevitzky brought to it.

What was said of Joachim's performance of this work can be said of Heifetz' here—for Heifetz also plays with an unquestionable love and devotion. One feels as though the concerto might have been written especially for him. Never have I heard the first movement played with such sensuous beauty of tone, or with more facile execution of its technical difficulties. Never have I heard the cadenza so sentimentally expressed, or so perfectly coordinated. The late Philip Hale's assertion that the concerto is not one for objective virtuoso display is borne out by this deeply felt and warmly expressed performance. Never before on records has the beauty and purity of Heifetz' tone been heard to better advantage than in the lovely slow movement.

Although the finale is played with the same care and devotion as the other two movements, one feels that both Kreisler and Szigeti bring to their performances here a precision and rhythmic verve that is closer to the Hungarian

qualities of the music. The tonal elegance of Heffetz, however, can hardly be said to be matched by either of the other two violinists.

From a reproductive standpoint, this set offers no problems. Its dynamic range is fully realized but not inflated, and the balance between orchestra and soloist is perfectly maintained.

—P. H. R.

HANDEL: *Organ Concerto No. 10, in D minor* (Op. 7, No. 4); played by E. Power Biggs, on the baroque organ in the Germanic Museum, Cambridge, Mass., with Arthur Fiedler's Sinfonietta. Victor set M-587, two discs, price \$4.50.

■ The engagement of E. Power Biggs to make a series of recordings on the baroque organ of the Germanic Museum at Cambridge is proof that Victor is abreast of the times. This organ was designed by G. Donald Harrison and built by Aeolian-Skinner in 1937, and is considered by many to be the finest reproduction of the organ of Bach's time in this country. There is a growing belief that only on such an instrument can the organ music of Bach, Handel and their predecessors sound its best. By means of good recording this gospel can most effectively be spread.

The original impetus was given to this idea by the foundation of the Bach Organ Music Society by the Columbia Company in England. In this country it began to move with the engagement of Carl Weinrich by Musicraft, and this organist's recordings set a standard not only of reproduction but of playing which has not yet been excelled. A year or so ago the Technichord Company of Boston made its bow with a set of Bach records played by Mr. Biggs, receiving such praise that Victor secured the artist.

Be it said at once that the playing of Mr. Biggs has not the vitality and drive which have been so much admired in that of Mr. Weinrich. In certain parts of the Technichord set—notably in the treatment of the great *Wachet auf* chorale prelude—this seems an advantage, although in the long run it is hardly so. The new Victor recording would have profited by more of these qualities. As for the reproduction, the fact that there is less of clarity here than in the fine Technichord set may be due in part at least to the difficulties of capturing the combined tones of organ and orchestra. I imagine that combination must present nearly the greatest problem the recording engineers are ever called upon to face. In the present instance they have not succeeded in eliminating an echo and resultant blur which will surprise those who have

heard the very clean work of Technichord.

To come to the most important thing last, this *Concerto* has all the charm and impressiveness of Handel. This is not the first recording—Alfred Sittard has played it in the Seiffert edition with the Berlin Philharmonic for Polydor, but I am not sure that this importation has ever reached these shores. In any case I would feel safe in recommending that preference be given the Victor set, if only because it lacks the evidence of having been arranged. The Arthur Fiedler Sinfonietta (how strange to find Fiedler collaborating in this kind of a recording) furnishes a sufficiently modest foil for Mr. Biggs.

IBERT: *Concertina da Camera for Saxophone and Orchestra* (3 sides); played by Marcel Mule with orchestra conducted by Philippe Gaubert; and VELLONES: *Rhapsody for Saxophone* (1 side); played by Marcel Mule with harp and celesta accompaniment. Victor set M-588, price \$3.50.

■ Ibert is one of the outstanding modern French musical wits, and his *Concertina da Camera* is a good example of his ability to produce music which is at once novel, skillful and amusing. It would perhaps be too much to say that this is one of the works the world has been waiting for—rather it is a bright and pleasant surprise. The idea of writing distinctly modern music in a form so antique as that of the *concerto da camera* is, when well carried out, in itself amusing, but Ibert adds to this a wealth of tonal color and contrapuntal skill. It is very much to his credit that the result seems in no way incongruous. Considering the limitations of his medium—the saxophone is not an instrument notable for expressive depth—and the content of his music, Ibert was wise not to make of his work a full-length concerto. As it is, although his composition has nothing momentous to say, it does not wear out its welcome.

The companion piece introduces Pierre Vellones to American lists. In this case at least, his music pretty well matches that of Ibert, for it is brilliant and amusing rather than profound or important. The chief contrast between the two works, indeed, is the accompaniment of harp and celesta which in the Vellones supplants Ibert's orchestra.

The soloist heard in this recording rejoices in the name of Marcel Mule, and he has made this name famous in France as one of that country's leading saxophonists. His recordings are numerous, although so far as I know this is his first solo to be released here. It fully justifies his reputation as a virtuoso—

and for this purpose the music could hardly have been better chosen. The orchestra under the celebrated M. Gaubert matches the soloist's dash and sparkle, and the recording is first-rate.

—P. M.

MOZART: *Concerto in D major, K. 314* (Flute); played by Marcel Moyse and Orchestra, direction Piero Coppola. Victor set M-589, two discs, price \$3.50.

■ Despite the fact that this recording is nearly ten years old, and that the second and third movements are injudiciously cut, there is still much in its favor. As the annotator says, the opening movement "is one of the most sheerly melodic productions of Mozart". And since this movement is complete on disc 12477, it can be enjoyed alone.

Moyse, one of the foremost flutists of our time, plays with fine fluidity of tone. He is less capably assisted here by Coppola, however, than he is by Bigot in the better recorded performance of the *G major Concerto* (Victor set M-396). It is a pity that this recording was not planned to include an additional disc, for the cuts in both the lovely andante and the final rondo are badly chosen. Over a third of the rondo is excised. The *G major Concerto* is recorded in its entirety, and since it dates back only a couple of years it is greatly preferable in more than one way to this set.

—P. G.

CHAMBER MUSIC

BEETHOVEN: *Quartet in F major, Op. 18, No. 1*; played by the Coolidge Quartet. Victor set M-550, three discs, price \$5.00.

■ The polished style of the Coolidge Quartet is better suited to modern music than to the classical or romantic schools, in our estimation. Although the performance here is sound, musicianly and smooth, it lacks the youthful elation and grace that Beethoven imparted to this music. Those famous stylists, who are thoroughly at home in Beethoven's music, the members of the Busch Quartet, bring much more to their playing of this work. With their richer tonal quality they yield a warmth that is lacking here. It is hardly necessary to make extensive comparison; anyone but an insensitive person will be instantly aware in a hearing of the two recordings that the Busch Quartet (Victor set M-206) is freer and more elated in its exposition of the entire work.

The recording here is excellent, yet we fail to find it markedly better than in the Busch set, even though the latter is all of five years

old. The fact that this set is cheaper than other seems to be the main point in its favor?

MOZART: *Sonata in C major, K. 296*; played by Nathan Milstein and Artur Balsam. Columbia set X-143, two discs, price \$3.50.

■ This sonata is regarded as the first mature work of its kind that Mozart wrote. It was composed in one day in 1778 at Mannheim, where Mozart and his mother were staying prior to their trip to Paris. Like so many of the other violin and piano sonatas, it was written for and dedicated to a pupil, Therese Pierrot-Serrarius, whom Mozart taught the clavier while in Mannheim.

The sonata opens with considerable forcefulness, the best of the material being given, as in most of these works, to the clavier part. Not until the development section is the violin brought into really expressive prominence. The andante that follows is idyllic in quality; the writing here for the violin is most ingratiating. The final rondo is cheerful but of less importance, and ends rather conventionally.

Milstein has been widely admired for his clarity and lucidity of tone. These qualities stand him in good stead here. It is pleasing to find a noted violin virtuoso who permits his accompanist to be heard in a happy balance. Balsam, a competent player in his own rights, does justice to the piano part.

This sonata was recorded in England for the Mozart Violin Sonata Society by Kraus and Goldberg; but this is its first recording to be issued here. The reproduction is good.

HAYDN: *Menuet and Gigue*; and PURCELL (arr. Warlock): *Fantasia No. 3 in Three Parts*; played by the Pasquier Trio. Columbia disc 69687-D, price \$1.50.

■ Haydn wrote about 30 trios for strings. To which of these the present pieces belong we were not able to find out. It is possible that these pieces form a complete work in themselves, but it is more than likely that they are parts from one. These movements are among the lighter things that Haydn wrote and are quite enjoyable for their own sake. They suggest a party at the Esterhazys for which Haydn was asked to provide some music for a few strings. The string trio was a more popular medium of expression in those days than it is today. The menuet has a friendly graciousness, and the fugue is decidedly genial.

The English Music Society has given us the nine 4-part fantasias of Purcell on records

umbia set 315), but this is the first realitiding of one of the 3-part fantasias. The music is richly meditative in the beginning, but later it gives way to a bright mood. Such tonal beauty as is here inscribed should not be left unheard, since it has too much to give.

The Pasquiers play with their accustomed poise and sensitivity; and the recording, although not new, does them full justice.

—P. G.

KEYBOARD

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in F minor, Op. 57 (Appassionata)*; played by Rudolf Serkin. Victor set M-583, three discs, price \$6.50

■ This is not a new recording; it was made in England during the fall of 1936. The first solo recording that Serkin made, it can hardly be said to do him notable justice. Serkin gets off to a bad start; his opening is heavy-handed and taken at too slow a pace. Comparison with Fischer, Gieseeking, and Schnabel shows this immediately. Serkin's extraordinary technical accomplishments stand him in good stead, but although he observes faithfully the markings of the first movement for dramatic contrast, he achieves neither the emotional intensity of Gieseeking nor Fischer's depth of dramatic fervor. His slow movement is, as one English critic has said, "just dull". The last movement again displays the pianist's technique but the passionate qualities of the music are not fully projected. One turns back to both Fischer and Gieseeking for the inherent excitement that Beethoven gave this music.

As far as recording is concerned, the set seems entirely satisfactory, although there may be some needle strain in its fullest cut tracks.

Summarizing the sets of this sonata generally available to the record buying public (Schnabel's must be excluded from this category as it is a Society issue), I am inclined to place Fischer's and Gieseeking's performances at the head of the list. I can well imagine anyone who is extremely fond of this great work acquiring both sets. From the standpoint of reproduction, despite the fact that it dates back four years, Fischer's performance is the smoother of these two. The Gieseeking recording in its fullest passages may present some problems of reproduction, particularly to a user of non-metallic needles.

If you are interested in acquiring a recording of the *Appassionata*, I urge you to hear the Fischer set (Victor M-279) as well as the Gieseeking (Columbia M-365) along with the present one to determine which has the most enduring qualities for your own enjoyment.

—P. H. R.

CHOPIN: *Sonata No. 2 in B flat minor, Op. 35* (5 sides) and *Mazurka No. 13 in A minor, Op. 17, No. 4*; played by Edward Kilenyi. Columbia set M-378, three discs, price \$5.00.

■ Modern recording does so much more for the pianist that those who recorded a work like this five or six years back are immediately placed at a disadvantage in a comparison of performances.

Among noted pianists who have recorded this work previously are Rachmaninoff, Brailowsky and Godowsky. Godowsky was famous for his interpretation of this sonata, and there are many who contend no living pianist played it as well as he. Be that as it may, Godowsky's recording (English Columbia) dates back at least a decade and can hardly be said to do him full justice.

Kilenyi is a brilliant pianist with a prodigious technique. Some may find his treatment of the first movement lacking in austerity, but few will deny its forcefulness. Certainly he brings out the fervor and excitement of the movement, and, in our estimation, it is to his credit that he does not sentimentalize its purely poetic sections. His treatment of



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the scherzo follows along the same lines. Again, we find it a great relief not to have the romanticism of the trio over-exploited. The famous Funeral March is rendered with appropriate dignity. One hardly expects a pianist to throw any new light on this music; it should be allowed always simply to speak for itself. The finale is played more effectively than ever before on records; it is marked *sotto voce* and the pianist keeps it subdued, thus enhancing its sombre, enigmatic qualities.

Perhaps not the greatest performance of this work on records, but assuredly a most artistic and, because of its excellent recording, satisfying one.

The mazurka, incorrectly marked No. 6 in A minor, Op. 7, No. 2 on the labels, is really the A minor one of Op. 17. It is a sadly introspective little work and Kilenyi plays it most expressively.

* * *

LISZT: *Consolation No 3 in D flat*, and *Valse oubliée No. 1* (Forgotten Waltz), played by Emil Sauer. Columbia disc 69688-D, price \$1.50.

■ It seems incredible that the pianistic artistry of Sauer should have had to wait so long to be represented appropriately on records. The recent failure of another veteran pianist might lead some to believe that the seventy-seven year old Sauer too is beyond his prime, but such is far from the case. Sauer's artistry is seemingly like an unquenchable flame. His exquisite legato and judicious rubato in the third *Consolation*, his singing tone and perfect phrasing, make this sentimental nocturnal composition not only an enjoyable phonographic experience but an extraordinary lesson in pianism. The waltz has been previously recorded by Horowitz (Victor disc 1455), but in the more modern recording of Sauer its ardent contrasts are more fully exploited.

—P. G.

INSTRUMENTAL

BRAHMS: (arr. Joachim): *Hungarian Dances Nos. 1 and 17*; played by Yehudi Menuhin with Marcel Gazelle at the piano. Victor 10-inc disc, No. 2010, price \$1.50.

■ The first of the Hungarian dances, in G minor, is an old favorite of ours; it is boldly contrasted and suggests sturdy peasants. The 17th dance, in F sharp minor, offers good contrast; it is tender and meditative at first but later it changes in tempo and becomes gay and festive. Menuhin plays these two pieces with fine poise and polished technique.

Perhaps more abandon could have been brought to his performance of the *G minor*, but that is something for the individual listener to decide. Admirers of this young violinist will not be disappointed in this disc. It is well recorded and the balance between the instruments is good.

* * *

CUI: *Orientale, Op. 50, No. 9*; and ALBENIZ: *Tango, Op. 165, No. 2* (arr. Kreisler); played by Emanuel Feuermann with Gerald Moore at the piano. Columbia 10-inch disc no. 17158-D, price \$1.00.

■ One of the greatest instrumentalists of our times turns his attention to two popular salon pieces this month. Feuermann's fine rich tone is well suited to both works, and it is to his credit that he plays them without unduly stressing their sentimental qualities. Cui's *Orientale* really belongs to a collection of violin pieces, but it is also effective on the cello. The recording is good.

—P. G.

VOICE

FOLK SONGS OF CENTRAL EUROPE: *Wach auf, Es wird scho' glei Dumpa; Der Mond ist aufgegangen; Maria durch ein Dornwald ging; In einem kühlen Grunde; Der späte Abend; Andreas Hofers Abschied vom Leben; Lärntal, Lärntal; Die Auglan voll Wasser; Bist einmal kommen, du Heiland der Welt; Schönster Herr Jesu*; sung by the Trapp Family Choir, under the direction of Franz Wasner. Victor set M-586, five 10-inch discs, price \$7.50.

■ The album of *Early Choral Music* which was made for Victor by the Trapp Family Choir and released last March has been so successful that the talented group has been called upon for another set, this time devoted to choral arrangements of the folk music of Central Europe. It is good to have this gentle music at this time. It should certainly do its part toward stemming the tide of war hate which is only too likely to pour in upon us. There is nothing exciting in this entire album—but there is a great deal of deep and quiet satisfaction.

The Trapp Family is a group of amateurs in the best sense of that misunderstood word. They began to sing together not only because it is an old family tradition in German countries to do so, but more especially because they loved to sing, and they have kept it up because they have had so much pleasure from their own singing. They are in no sense a virtuoso choir, and so they wisely confine

lives to non-virtuoso music. Everything they do is on a low scale emotionally and dynamically. Therefore it is possible to get too much of their singing, but taken in small doses it is always delightful.

Perhaps in no countries is the bond between music and the life of the people so close as in Germany and in Austria. This folk music is a far gentler and more sentimental expression than, for instance, the strikingly modal songs of the English countryside. And everything German in music stems from the music of the people—even to the musical expression of such intellectual musicians as Bach and Brahms. These songs, indeed, are the very stuff of which Brahms' music was made. He did a good deal of arranging of them himself, and he set a style in that sort of thing which has remained more or less standard. Most of the settings in this album are by the Choir's conductor, Dr. Wasner, and with the single exception of *Schönster Herr Jesu*, which seems to me overharmonized, I would call them models of how arranging should be done.

DESPRES: *Ave vera virginitas* (unaccompanied); and BERLIOZ: *L'Enfance du Christ: Adieu des Bergers*; sung by the Strasbourg Cathedral Choir, with orchestra, conducted by Abbe Hoch. Columbia disc, No. 69683D, price \$1.50

■ The disc is another in the recent series made in the Strasbourg Cathedral, and is of very much the same quality as the Mozart-Gasparini coupling which appeared in this country last April. The music now presented is not only really unusual, but beautiful as well; therefore we could wish that there were more genuine distinction in the performances. The DesPres motet is sung rather violently, with little of the poise and dignity which is the essence of this kind of music. Perhaps in their fear of being dull and pedantic the choir has erred on the other side.

In spite of Berlioz's reputation as the arch-jumboist, he could write simple and lovely tunes with the best of them. This pastorale is an example, and that other excerpt from *L'Enfance du Christ* recently released by Columbia (P-69340D) is another. *The Farewell of the Shepherds* is not altogether unknown in American churches, and it makes excellent recording material. Unfortunately, however, there is a rather clumsy exaggeration of accents in this chorus as performed in Strasbourg. The recording is splendid.

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DVORAK: *Songs My Mother Taught Me*; and
BRIDGE: *Love Went A-Riding*; sung by
Kirsten Flagstad, soprano, with piano ac-
companiment. Victor 10-inch disc, No. 2009,
price \$1.50.

■ Mme. Flagstad's latest release affords what is easily her most successful venture into English song, in spite of certain handicaps. Natalia Macfarren's translation of Dvorak's *Gypsy songs* is definitely a bad one, although *Songs My Mother Taught Me* has been sung, so often in this version that the English text is now accepted almost as if it were the original. I suppose we may thank these forcedly poetic words for the fact that this really respectable song has fallen out of favor with the more selective musical public. Mme. Flagstad's delivery of the melody is beautifully sustained, and the voice sounds more rich and even than it has sometimes done on records. Her English is rather on the careful side, very clear in spite of the fact that her vowels are just a shade too thick to be perfect in this language.

Love Went A-Riding, by Frank Bridge, is a far more ordinary composition. In this recording it loses what point it has because the soprano fails to make the words understand-

able. Here, too, her voice takes on that thinness which is not characteristic of Flagstad on the stage, but which is familiar to those who know her records. —P. M.

REYNALDO HAHN: *L'Heure Exquise*; and *Cimetière de Campagne*; sung by Ninon Vallin, soprano, with piano accompaniments. Columbia disc, 10-inch, No. P-17160-D, price \$1.00.

■ Ninon Vallin, of long experience that has also meant earnest striving, presents deeply felt performances of Hahn's delicate songs. She answers the demands of all who know this kind of music well, and you singers particularly should study such artistry and fervor carefully, even though the voice production cannot be fully recommended. *L'Heure Exquise*, sometimes translated *The Witching Hour* (the literal *Exquisite Hour* would seem to be more appropriate), is a poem by Paul Verlaine, and it says in effect, "My love, now, in the exquisite tranquillity of the night, is our time for dreaming." *Cimetière de Campagne* (*Country Church Yard*), was composed by Hahn when he was twenty. The poet, Gabriel Vicaire, speaks of revisiting the garden cemetery of his youth, and of the sweet reveries it brings to him.

A. KASTALSKY: *Ich Glaube* (*I Believe*); and OLD CHURCH MOTIVE (arr.): *Aus der Abendliturgie* (*From the Evening Prayer*); sung by the Don Cossack Choir, conducted by Serge Jaroff. Unaccompanied. Columbia disc, No. 7355-M, price \$1.50.

■ These are excellent recordings of wonderful choral singing. The labels, Columbia's attractive new ones, present a peculiar puzzle in that the titles are given in German, while the music is sung in Russian, and the record is issued in the United States. Both recordings are profoundly religious in sentiment, and the shading of color and dynamics, richly present, never oversteps appropriate bounds. *I Believe* is a credo, and it projects the mysticism and the sturdy confidence of a confession of faith. The *Evening Prayer* is similarly good church music, but it is nevertheless a little less uncompromising. From the smooth body of sound rise two solo voices. One is a deep bass, supporting the music with low f's and c's. The other, near the end, is a mellifluous and expressive tenor. The fine intonation of the singers, and the beautiful resultant harmonies must also be mentioned.

—A. W.

FROM THE OPERA: *Faust*: *Salut* (Gounod); *Roméo et Juliette*: *Ah! lève-toi, soleil* (Gounod) (disc 15542); *Manon*: *Ah! fuyez, douce image* (Massenet); *Le Roi d'Ys*: *Vainement, ma bien aimée* (Lalo), (disc 15543); *I Pescatori di Perle*: *Mi par d'udir ancora* (Bizet); *L'Arlesiana*: *Lamento di Federico* (Cilea) (disc 15544); sung by Richard Crooks, tenor, with orchestra conducted by Wilfred Pelletier. Victor set M-585, price \$6.50.

■ With this somewhat loosely titled album Richard Crooks takes his place among the singers singled out by Victor for the honor of a special recital set. The arias which the tenor sings are all very familiar, with the possible exception of the Cilea *Lamento*—which, however, in this country at least, is probably the best known passage from the works of its composer. Without any exception these tenor scenes have been recorded frequently enough before, so that the interest in these new versions centers definitely around the singer. The fact that they may now be had all in one Victor album (with a helpful booklet to supply comment as well as original and translated words) may prove an additional attraction.

The singing in the set is typical of the tenor as his public knows him today. The voice—unquestionably one of the finest at present before the public—is not infrequently pushed beyond its naturally lyric capacities, and the effect of this is heightened by mechanical over-amplification—though not so seriously here as in the last Crooks record I reviewed. The balance with the orchestra is still a little too much on the singer's side; but here again there has been some improvement. Mr. Crooks' bag of vocal tricks—such as his too frequent use of falsetto, a habit perhaps due to continued radio singing—are familiarly in evidence in these recordings. In short, if you know the Crooks style, this set will hold no surprises for you. In passing it should be noted that the tenor has not hesitated to transpose the arias to make them more comfortable to his voice.

When this has been said there is little need for a detailed analysis of the set. The best singing is to be found in the *Manon* aria, which is done with real conviction. Less free from mannerisms, but also worthy of praise is the Cilea scene. The *Faust* aria has a violin obbligato by John Corigliano, but unfortunately the little postlude has been cut. And I should have preferred the Bizet aria in the original French, though singers seem to like to sing in Italian.

—P. M.

GRIEG: *En Svane*; Jordan: *Horst du*; and Jordan: *Drick!*; sung by Lauritz Melchior, tenor, with piano. Victor 10-inch disc, No. 2007, price \$1.50.

■ I hope that some day someone will make an exhaustive study of the songs of Grieg, because I feel that they merit far more appreciation than has yet been given them. *En Svane* is one of the great ones, and a really magnificent conception it is. As for this new recording, it seems to me that, if we overlook an occasional very slight suggestion of hurry (due, no doubt, to crowding two songs on one record side) this is the most successful lieder singing in Mr. Melchior's list of discs. Comparison with Mme. Flagstad's record, which happens to be one of her best, will prove at least one thing. The song should never be sung in German. Without understanding Ibsen's original Norwegian poem, I still can feel a tremendous conviction in the song as Melchior sings it—a conviction which is lacking in the rather lame German translation. What a shame, then, that Flagstad, too, did not record the song in her own native tongue. Personally I prefer to leave the hidden meanings (there are always plenty of them in Scandinavian poetry) for those who can catch them, and simply enjoy as much as I can understand.

Good measure is characteristic of the Melchior song discs, though, as I have already remarked, this is not always an unmixed blessing. It is a little strange, then, that one side of this one is definitely short. We might have expected the two brief Swerre Jordan songs to occupy one side (thereby benefitting the Grieg) but the terrific brilliance which is characteristic of both of them would have proved too much. I do not know the music of this composer (who is said to be very popular in Norway) but I suspect that a more contrasting song could have been found among his works. However, Mr. Melchior sings with such enthusiasm and with such prodigal outpouring of voice that I will not even complain that the piano part is weak—the songs are exciting as he sings them.

* * *

FAVORITE NEGRO SPIRITUALS: *Goin' to shout all over God's Heaven*; *Reign, Massa Jesus, Reign*; *Little David, play on your harp*; *In bright mansions above*; *Ezekiel saw de wheel*; *Mary an' Martha jes' gone 'long*; *I want to be ready*; *Ole-time religion*; *De old ark a-moverin' along*; *Want to go to heaven when I die*; sung by the Hampton Institute Quartet (George F. Hamilton,

Gregory Kiah, Jeremiah Thomas, William Byrd). Musicraft set 35, five 10-inch discs, price \$5.50.

■ The serious recognition of the Negro spiritual is traceable to the Czech Antonin Dvorak, who urged our composers to make use of native melodies in building up a national school of American music. And it was Dvorak's pupil, Harry Burleigh, who became the most popular arranger of these songs—in fact Burleigh's not inconsiderable reputation is founded largely on his setting and singing of spirituals. Nowadays the tendency is to discard such "perversions", and to revert to the pure spirituals as sung by groups of Negroes in the South. George F. Ketcham, in the booklet that accompanies the new Hampton Institute recordings, tells us that the songs "to have the authentic flavor should be sung by more than one voice". Whatever the quality, as songs, of the Burleigh arrangements, or the works of others along the same lines, they cannot be said to represent the Negro spiritual in its pure state. In short they should not be considered as folk music at all, but as the work of composers using folk themes.

Musicraft's latest album serves to drive this point home. The ten songs included in this set are not only genuine folk music, but they are sung in the authentic manner. The Hampton Institute Quartet has for long been famous for their singing of this music, and these records make the reasons for their celebrity quite clear. The interpretations (to use an unapt word) are really quite personal, for Mr. Ketcham tells us "as there are changes in the quartet from time to time, there are generally corresponding changes in the harmony, for no two men would 'feel' the part alike". Therefore every authentic performance must be personal, and there can be no "absolute version" of a spiritual. Certain characteristics there are which, of course, are to be found in all true Negro harmonizing—a certain solidity in the voices resulting from a natural feeling for blend, a fascinating, almost "barber shop" quality, and a tremendous and obvious absorption in what the singers are telling us about.

The selection in the set is a good one, bringing in some of the familiar—but not the too familiar—songs, as well as several that will probably be as new to most hearers as they were to me. One or two—*In bright mansions above*, for example—bear a strong enough resemblance to good old fashioned gospel hymns to invite speculation as to their exact relationship to that lowest form of religious expression. Somehow the spirituals have a saving

naiveté which lifts them above the level of their white counterparts. In the recording of this set a soft and slightly muffled quality has been preferred to brilliance. A little more bite might have made the tone more vital, but it is always pleasant and clear enough to allow the words to be understood.

—P. M.

OTHER RECORDINGS

FAMOUS WALTZES, Vol. 1—*Sweetheart Waltz* from *The Gypsy Baron*; *Southern Roses Waltz*; *The Great Waltz-Selection*; *Gold and Silver Waltz*; and *Over the Waves-Waltz*; played by Anton and the Paramount Theatre Orchestra, London, Al Bollington at the Organ. Victor set P-7, three 10-inch discs, price \$2.75.

KALMAN: *The Gypsy Princess* — *Selection*; and LEHAR: *The Merry Widow* — *Selection*; played by Sidney Torch, cinema organist. Columbia disc 7356-M, price \$1.25.

SOUSA: *Semper Fidelis—March*; and RAUSKI: *La Regiment de Sambre et Meuse—March*; played by Band of H. M. Grenadier Guards. Columbia 10-inch disc no. 424-M, price 75c.

TRENET: *Menilmontant—Chanson*; and *Tout me sourit—Chanson*; sung by Charles Trenet with orchestra. Columbia 10-inch disc 423-M, price 75c.

Owing to the fact that some records arrived too late for a comprehensive survey, it has been found necessary to hold over several reviews until next month. Ed.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of the AML:

I have finally heard the new Roth Recording of the Mozart *Quartet in G Major*, issued by Columbia. In my recent notes on this quartet, I stated that we were yet to have a satisfactory recording of this work; this situation need no longer trouble the record-collector.

I quite agree with the reviewer's opinion in the September issue, that a more opulent interpretation of this work is conceivable and perhaps desirable. However, I doubt if any more polished interpretation could be asked for. Without giving a feeling of over-carefulness, the Roth interpretation is one of the most sensitive and well-conceived and executed that I have heard of a Mozart quartet. I don't know whether the credit belongs to the en-

gineers or to the players—probably it is due both—but seldom does the part-writing stand out so well. This is, I believe, of great importance in Mozart, whose genius for instrumental texture I have already commented upon.

I found that the rather daring minuet suffered most at the hands of the restrained Roth performance. The first movement and the finale, while subdued, contain a great deal of beauty. I have long awaited such a crystalline interpretation of the slow movement as I found on these discs. I might note here that I myself was quite disappointed when I first heard the Roth set of the *A major* Mozart *Quartet*; but I have found that what I thought was a colorless performance has grown on me as few recordings ever have. I'm sure that repeated hearings of these sensitive interpretations will give the listener increasing enjoyment and insight into the mastery of Mozart's string quartets.

Sincerely,

Phil Hart,

Portland, Oregon, Sept. 15, 1939.

To The American Music Lover,

Just for the sake of the record, may I offer corrections to a couple of statements in the September issue?

Page 165: "two women of today — Poldi Mildner and Guiomar Novaes (neither represented on records)". Victor released quite a list of acoustic recordings by Novaes and there are some electrical records listed in the export lists. I have an HMV by Mildner, "Pastoral Variations" with Chopin "Etudes" on the reverse; "Arabesque" (Strauss-Schultzevler) HMV C2466 is listed in the 1936 English HMV catalog.

Page 179: Review of Ippolitov Ivanov: "In a Mountain Pass"—"this has not had a modern recording." I have the electrically recorded complete "Caucasian Sketches" five sides, Polidor Green Label 10 inch discs 24802, 24803 and 25027, Alois Melichar and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. To be exact, these are not high fidelity recordings.

With best wishes,

Yours very truly,

J. W. C. Hesser.

Nichols, Iowa, Sept. 6, 1939.

To the Editor,

Congratulations once more on your splendid magazine. I was particularly struck with the plea for more recorded music of Vincent d'Indy in the September issue. For years I

have pleaded for the d'Indy "Second Symphony" and the "Jour d'ete a la montagne" to be recorded. They are masterpieces of the first order, shamefully neglected by most of our conductors. With every good wish,

Sincerely,

Albert J. Dooner

Philadelphia, Pa., Sept. 6, 1939.

SWING MUSIC NOTES

ENZO ARCHETTI

■ The terrible state of affairs in Europe at present has played havoc with the lives of not only those directly concerned with the conflict but even those bystanders who are too uncomfortably close. Naturally, all music, including swing music, has buried its head to shut out the noise. Jimmie Lunceford has cancelled his tour. From Paris, only silence; and the fate of the three much awaited *Swing* records made by Duke's men is a deep mystery.

But, like the Americans who are trying not to think about the war, the Belgians are also putting up a brave front and trying to pretend nothing is happening. In fact, as if to prove this, the Jazz Club of Belgium has just sent out circulars announcing that its treasurer, Mr. F. R. Faecq, will visit New York beginning September 12th for the purpose of engaging jazz artists and orchestras for concerts in Belgium; and to arrange for repressings of American recordings under Belgian labels, as well as the exchange or sale of matrices.

Incidentally, the JCB is willing to negotiate with some American publishers to sell the translation rights of Robert Goffin's *Aux frontiers du Jazz*, the first book, in point of date, to be written about jazz. Mr. F. R. Faecq can be reached c/o American Express, New York City.

The next issue of the magazine *Swing* will announce that Artie Shaw has been designated by 500 bandleaders as the No. 1 radio maestro of the year. In the poll Artie Shaw gained 196 votes, Benny Goodman 175, and Bob Crosby 47. One year ago the lineup was quite different.

Station WNEW has inaugurated a new series of swing programs called the Martin Block Swing Club. This is not a recorded

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(Continued on page 233)

program but a flesh and blood affair held at Manhattan Center in New York for the benefit of jitterbugs and those who just listen. It is held on Tuesday nights at 8:00 and admission is limited to members of the *Make Believe Ballroom*, membership in which can be bought for a price. The features of the sessions are guest orchestras—new ones each week. One program we heard featured Benny Goodman's, Teddy Wilson's, and Stuff Smith's Orchestras. Benny Goodman sounded better than ever. The Fletcher Henderson influence is plainly discernible.

Coincidental with Benny Goodman's switch-over from Victor to Columbia is the appearance of a new Columbia product: a fifty-cent, red label popular record, very smart in design and as smooth-surfaced as the classic Columbias. From now on they will offer the best in popular music Columbia has to offer. Which is considerable, since the entire Brunswick roster is being transferred to the new label and in it are such names as Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman. The Brunswick label is being discontinued in the popular field but the Vocalion label will continue.

Add to the Odd Names For Orchestras list the latest oddity to appear on a label: "Bud Freeman and his Summa Cum Laude Orchestra." Their first Bluebird record *I've Found a New Baby* and *Easy to Get* (Number 10370) has proved to be a decided success.

Victor explains the name in this way:

"And it's to the ivy-covered, classic halls of Princeton University that this swing honor group owes its curious nom de wax."

"Last June, when Princeton's class of 1929 was readying its tenth reunion, three of old Nassau's sons, all swing-lovers, set for themselves the task of getting a band for the party. They were Frank Norris, editor of *Time* magazine, Herbert Sanford, an advertising executive, and Bill Priestly, an architect.

"These men assembled an eight-piece combination from prominent jazz men they knew. There were tenor saxist Bud Freeman, known for his outstanding work with Tommy Dorsey and Benny Goodman; guitarist Eddie Condon; Brad Gowens, the only jazz trombonist to use a valve trombone [what about Juan Tizol of Duke Ellington's band?—E. A.]; Pee Wee Russell whose gargoyle-like expression over a clarinet have been familiar to followers of 'Le Jazz Hot' for years; cornetist Max Kaminsky; bass-player Clyde Newcomb, formerly with Bobby Hackett; pianist Dave Bowman and drummer Dave Tough.

"The band clicked so well at Princeton, that the men decided to stick together as a unit.

A short while later, the honor swingfest opened at Nick's, a famous Greenwich Village Swing rendezvous. There RCA Victor officials heard the band, signed it for a series of recordings. The rest you'll know after you hear the band's first Bluebird release."

To which this column adds that you will certainly hear something when you listen to this record.

On September 14 a delightful novelty was heard on the air. Yella Pessl was guest artist on the Kraft Music Hall program (Thursday nights, 10:00 P. M., Station WEAJ) during which she played some Bach on the harpsichord. Then, to prove she didn't necessarily belong to the long-underwear group because she played Bach, she swung *Dipsy Doodle* on the harpsichord, with John Scott Trotter's orchestra backing her up! And a creditable performance it was, too!

A new jazz publication is now on the market. Called *Jazz Information*, at present it is issued weekly in mimeographed form at ten cents a copy. Because it is a weekly paper its news is right up to the minute. Suggestion: improve your stencil or buy a new mimeograph machine. Otherwise—a good news sheet to read.

A raft of new records has arrived for review. Each is so good that it is hardly fair to review them as briefly as space makes necessary.

Our first group comes from the Hot Record Society. Encased in a handsome red album decorated with a special design by E. Simms Campbell, we have four 10-inch records—repressing of rare records whose existence is almost legendary. Collectors would give their eye teeth for original copies. These four records were dubbed from copies owned by Stephen W. Smith, one of the members of the advisory board of the H.R.S., who, to the best of my knowledge, is the only person in the United States who owns an original copy of all four records—the only four records Earl Hines made for Q.R.S. and, according to some collectors, the four best records he ever made.

Just Too Soon.

Chicago High Life (H.R.S. Number 11).

Off Time Blues.

Monday Date (H.R.S. Number 19).

Panther Rag.

Stowaway (H.R.S. Number 20).

Chimes in Blues.

Blues in Thirds (H.R.S. Number 21).

Piano solos by Earl "Father" Hines. H.R.S. Album No. 1, four 10-inch records. Price \$3.50

All sides are original compositions by Earl H. *Tiger*. All were originally recorded for Q.R.S. but coupled differently, in this manner: the first and fifth titles (in the above list) on Disc 7039; the second and fourth on Disc 7037; the third and eighth on Disc 7036; and the sixth and seventh on Disc 7038.

In this group, *Monday Date* and *Chimes in Blues* are most interesting as compositions. Incidentally, they are better recorded than the rest and have been dubbed most successfully. Those who are familiar with the Q.R.S. recordings, made roughly around 1926, and Q.R.S. surfaces, which were very rough, will agree that these dubbings are satisfactory.

B'ue Note again scores a direct hit with one of the best records it has issued to date.

Pounding Heart Blues.

Summertime from *Porgy and Bess* (Gershwin).

The first played by the Port of Harlem Seven (personnel: Sidney Becht, clarinet; Frank Newton, trumpet; H. C. Higgenbotham, trombone; Meade "Lux" Lewis, piano; Teddy Bunn, guitar; John Williams, bass; Sidney Catlett, drums.)

Blue Note No. 6; 12 inch; price \$1.50.

Note that the group playing *Pounding Heart Blues* is the same that recorded *Nightly Blues* and *Rocking the Blues* (Blue Note No. 3) except for the addition of Sidney Bechet.

Both sides are chiefly Sidney Bechet's show, for which we are thankful because it is our private opinion that no musician lives who can play the soprano sax as he does.

All join in the introduction to the *Blues* (which is an improvisation and not a composition of any one man) and J. C. Higgenbotham leads with a beautifully poised first chorus; Meade "Lux" Lewis takes the second in a movingly subdued manner, very different from

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## Record Buyers' Guide

(Continued from page 231)

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**National Music Shop**  
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**Sun Radio Company**  
212 Fulton Street

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**Vesey Music Shop**  
50 Church Street

(Continued on page 235)

what is usually heard from him. Frankie Newton follows with a brilliant third chorus backed by some remarkable drumming. From then on Sidney Bechet takes it on the clarinet in the suave manner that only he can manage. The whole work is wonderfully moving. In the all-in finale Frankie and Bechet stand out strongly. Most exhilarating.

*Summertime* is entirely Bechet's record. Teddy Bunn leads the introduction and accompanies Sidney's first chorus as only a master of the guitar can. Here is a man whose talents have not yet been fully appreciated except by a few connoisseurs, including Hugues Panassié. Sidney Bechet takes every chorus, improvising and reminiscing (there are snatches of the *Miserere* from *Il Trovatore* and Massenet's *Elégie*), beautifully supported by the other four men. Meade is barely evident. He is content to add to the background.

A whole 12-inch side of solos by one man, however great, may sound like pretty boring business but not so when Sidney Bechet handles that business. His soprano sax is smooth and warm, growling and vibrant, negroid or white as his mood changes.

A remarkable record and a remarkable recording.

## Record Collectors' Corner . . .

Julian Morton Moses

■ The war in Europe may take its toll of a quantity of valuable record matrices. Most, if not all, of the earliest and best Fonotipia records issued in Italy were pressed in Austria or Germany, although recorded in Milan. Prior to the cataclysmic events of a few years back, the Carl Lindstrom associates, German manufacturers, controlled this company, and the recent re-releases of some of the old Fonotipia recordings, issued by English Parlophone, were unquestionably made from masters long interred in Germany. It is questionable whether more matrices than were actually needed changed their residence to England; although, along with all collectors, we sincerely hope they did.

Our numerous correspondents in England have not been silenced as yet, but all mail comes through at erratic intervals. Record collectors in England during the past year have been looking towards the United States for some of their choicest items. Now, even

though they want buy more records, circumstances make the fulfillment of this desire a long and tedious as well as uncertain affair, to which even yet they seem willing to subscribe.

We have been deluged with overseas correspondence this past month, so we have not been able to prepare a regular article. Next month we intend to write a long one continuing our discussion of recordings available mainly through foreign language catalogues in this country.

## In the Popular Vein

Horace Van Norman

AAAA—*What's New?* and *What Goes On Behind Your Eyes?* Hal Kemp and his Orchestra. Victor 26336.

■ *What's New?* is the most recent in the present cycle of song hits which, however varied their origin, have all been conceived and played at the beginning of their careers as purely instrumental works. *Deep Purple*, *Moon Love*, *The Lamp Is Low*, *Stairway to the Stars*, *Our Love*, and *the Angels Sing*, virtually every really first-class song hit of the past year or more, has been a lovely melody first of all and only later, as an afterthought, a song. All of which seems to prove that the tune's the thing. *What's New* has been a conspicuous item in Bob Crosby's portfolio for the past several years under the title of *I'm Free*. Wordless, it was necessarily restricted in its appeal, despite its really enchanting melody. Written, incidentally, by Bob Haggart, Crosby's prodigious string bass virtuoso, it needed only the addition of a set of lyrics, albeit highly banal lyrics, to vault almost immediately into the upper notches of the Hit Parade, where it will probably be found by the time this reaches print. Kemp's record of it is praiseworthy almost exclusively by virtue of the hypnotic vocal provided by that potent songstress, Nan Wynn. Many times vocalist (on discs) with Hudson-de Lange, Teddy Wilson and others, she is now doing the best work of her career with Kemp and highly fascinating work it is, revealing a cunning artistry that many a more renowned singer might study with profit.

AAAA—*I Swung the Election*, and *Aunt Hagar's Blues*. Jack Teagarden and his Orchestra. Columbia 35206.



■ *Aunt Hagar's Blues* is the sort of Deep South stuff that Teagarden is completely at home with. Remindful somewhat of Teagarden's most popular record, *Basin Street Blues*, it is made to order for Mr. T. and his trombone and is a magnificent blues in its own right. In an epoch when sensationalism abounds, a right record like this one shines out like the proverbial good deed in a naughty world.

AAAA—*Man With a New Radio*, and *Hazy and Blue*. Alec Templeton. Victor 26348.

■ Good comedy on record has been so rare for years as to be practically non-existent. Not since the heyday of Walter C. Kelly, Bert Williams and The Two Black Crows have records given us anything very memorable to laugh at. It appears that this rather prolonged drought is about to be relieved with the advent of Alec Templeton to the record lists. This very amazing person, whose superlative and manifold talents must by now be familiar to everyone, has recently been induced to record some of his ferociously funny sketches privately and this is the first of a new series about to be launched by Victor. The idea of *Man With a New Radio* is none too original in itself, having been utilized years ago by the Happiness Boys in *Twisting the Dials*, but the diabolical skill with which Templeton projects all of his imitations is enough to make it a "must" item for anyone who is still able to laugh at anything whatever. *Hazy and Blue* is a charmingly unpretentious piano piece of his own, which he plays like the patrician artist that he is.

AAA—*Goodnight My Beautiful*, and *Our First Kiss*. Horace Heidt and his Musical Knights. Brunswick 35213.

■ These are two numbers of no particular distinction from the current *George White's Scandals*, a show which is likewise of no particular distinction. On second thought, the latter half of the preceding sentence seems to us to be a rank understatement, but we are fortunately reviewing records, not shows, so we'll let it stand. Anyhow, Heidt seems to be bolstering his position as the outstanding sweet band on records with each new disc. Never one to overlook any bets, Heidt makes uncommonly effective use of the Novachord, musicians' union or no musicians' union, giving his band a depth and richness of tone color not duplicated by any other band of comparable size. And by the use of his goodly crew of vocalists and instrumental soloists he is able to mix his style frequently enough to avoid the deadly monotony that most bands

## Record Buyers' Guide

(Continued from page 233)

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## The Gramophone

Edited by

COMPTON MACKENZIE and

CHRISTOPHER STONE

—an independent magazine devoted to the interest of the gramophone user.

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inevitably achieve after a certain period with the same vocalists and arrangers.

AAA—*Blue Orchids*, and *Day In - Day Out*.

Tommy Dorsey and his Orch. Victor 26339.

■ Here is the almost unprecedented example of two potential Hit Parade leaders on one record. For reasons of a commercial nature which are too obvious to mention, this happens very seldom indeed, and one can only wonder why it happened in this instance. In any case, it makes a bargain package for the customer, and happily both tunes are well enough recorded here to render further inquiries regarding either tune somewhat superfluous. *Blue Orchids* is a Hoagy Carmichael number—both lyric and tune—which means along in a thoroughly charming manner, while *Day In - Day Out* is one of those lengthy tunes of semi-symphonic proportions which Cole Porter first taught the boys to write and bears the names of Rube Bloom and Johnny Mercer. And if there is anything in the nature of a success guarantee which a popular song may possess, that would a lyric by Johnny Mercer.

AAA—*Tomorrow Night*, and *Shadows*. Horace Heidt and his Musical Knights. Columbia 35203.

■ One of the more recent acquisitions by Heidt is Frankie Carle, classy pianist best known as composer of *Sunrise Serenade*. In *Shadows*, a new number written by Carle, he does a very fetching piano chorus which provokes the wish that subsequent Heidt discs may be similarly graced.

AAA—*Park Avenue Fantasy*, and *Then I Wrote the Minuet in G*. Matty Malneck and his Orchestra. Columbia 35212.

■ After having *Stairway to the Stars* dinned ceaselessly into our ears during past months, it is pleasant once again to hear its progenitor, *Park Avenue Fantasy*, even in this tabloid version. After all, it's Malneck's own number, so he should be privileged to play around with it as much as he likes. Malneck's band, which is as adroit a little group as you'll find around, not excluding a certain Scott Quintet, plays it with an abundance of finesse, as it does the fox-trotted Beethoven *Minuet in G*, on the reverse.

AAA—*Melancholy Mood*, and *Honky-Tonk Train*. Bob Zurke and his Delta Rhythm Band. Victor 26342.

■ The foremost white exponent of boogie-woogie, Bob Zurke, appears here with his band to excellent advantage in one of the ver-

table classics of this genre, Meade Lux Lewis' *Honky-Tonk Train*. Despite the frantically monotonous formulas of these curious concoctions that are termed boogie-woogie, they can be made almost palatable with the addition of orchestral color, and particularly when done as skillfully as here and in the similarly inspired Bob Crosby efforts. Highly exciting stuff in extremely small doses, it becomes as irritating as an interminable repetition of the alphabet or the multiplication table in more lengthy auditions.

## OTHER CURRENT POPULAR RECORDINGS OF MERIT

(The following are rated from quality of performance regardless of record quality.)

AAA—*In the Mood*, and *I Want to Be Happy*. Glen Miller and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10416.

AAA—*You Took Advantage of Me*, and *I'm Yours*. Ziggy Elman and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10413.

AAA—*Love Grows On The White Oak Tree*, and *The Last Jump*. Charlie Barnet and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10389.

AAA—*Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie*, and *Pound Cake*. Count Basie and his Orchestra. Vocalion 5085.

AAA—*Ut Da Zay and Crescendo in Drums*. Cab Calloway and his Orch. Vocalion 5062.

AAA—*Rosetta*, and *Love Me*. Wood Herman and his Orchestra. Decca 2728.

AAA—*It Was A Lover and his Lass*, and *Oh Mistress Mine*. Bob Crosby's Bob Cats. Decca 2662.

AAA—*Body and Soul*, and *Dixieland Detour*. Jimmy Dorsey and his Orch. Decca 2735.

AA—*Gin Mill Special*, and *Tuxedo Junction*. Erskine Hawkins and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10409.

AA—*Traffic Jam*, and *Serenade to a Savage*. Artie Shaw and his Orch. Bluebird B-10385.

AA—*That Da Da Strain*, and *Someday Sweetheart*. Muggsy Spanier and his Ragtime Band. Bluebird B-10384.

AA—*Bread and Gravy*, and *Push-Out*. Ethel Ethel Waters with Ed. Mallory and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10415.

AA—*A Ghost of a Chance*, and *I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles*. Mildred Bailey and her Orchestra. Vocalion 5086.

AA—*Baby Won't You Please Come Home*, and *Shanty Boat On The Mississippi*. Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra. Decca 2729.

AA—*It's a Hundred To One*, and *The Paper Picker*. Jan Savitt and his Orch. Decca 2738.

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